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THE
EVIDENCES
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
JOSEPH ADDISON, ESQ.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,
SEVERAL DISCOURSES
Against Atheism and Infidelity,
AND IN
ENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION,
CASSIONALLY PUBLISHED BY HIM AND OTHERS ;
NOW COLLECTED INTO ONE BODY,
AND
DGED UNDER THEIR PROPER HEADS.

WITH A
PREFACE,
CONTAINING THE SENTIMENTS OF
MOYLE, MR. LOCKE, AND SIR ISAAC NEWTON,
CONCERNING THE GOSPEL REVELATION.

CHISWICK :
PRINTED BY C. WHITTINGHAM,
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1819.





PREFACE.

THE character of Mr. ADDISON and his writings, for justness of thought, strength of reasoning, and purity of style, is too well established to need a recommendation; but their greatest ornament, and that which gives a lustre to all the rest, is his appearing, throughout, a zealous advocate for Virtue and Religion against Profaneness and Infidelity. And because his excellent discourses upon those subjects lie dispersed among his other writings, and are by that means not so generally known and read as they deserve, it was judged to be no unseasonable service to religion, to publish them together in a distinct volume; in hopes, that the politeness and beauty peculiar to Mr. Addison's writings would make their way to persons of a superior character and a more general education; and that, as they come from the hands of a layman, they may be more readily received and considered by young gentlemen as a proper manual of religion.

Our modern Sceptics and Infidels are great pretenders to reason and philosophy, and are willing to have it thought that none who are really possessed of those talents can easily assent to the truth of Christianity. But it falls out very unfortunately for them and their cause, that those persons within our own memory, who are confessed to have been the most perfect reasoners and philosophers of their time, are also known to have been firm believers, and they laymen; I mean Mr. Boyle, Mr. Locke, Sir Isaac Newton, and Mr. Addison: who, modestly speaking, were as good thinkers and reasoners, as the best among the Sceptics and Infidels at this day. Some of them might have their particular opinions about this or that point in Christianity, which will be the case as long as men are men; but the thing here insisted on is, that they were accurate reasoners, and at the same time firm believers.

Mr. BOYLE, the most exact searcher into the works of nature that any age has known, and who saw Atheism and Infidelity beginning to show themselves in the loose and voluptuous reign of King Charles the Second, pursued his philosophical inquiries with religious views, to establish the minds of men in a firm belief and thorough sense of the infinite power and *wisdom of the great Creator.*

account we have from 'one who was
tely acquainted with him, and preached
veral sermon ; ' It ' appeared to those
onversed with him in his inquiries into
, that his main design in that (on which
had his own eye most constantly, so he
are to put others often in mind of it)
o raise in himself and others vaster
ts of the greatness and glory, and of
dom and goodness of God. This was
p in his thoughts, that he concludes the
of his will, which relates to that illus-
body, the Royal Society, in these words,
ing them a happy success in their laud-
tempts to discover the true nature of
rks of God ; and praying that they and
her searchers into physical truths may
lly refer their attainmients to the glory
great Author of Nature, and to the
rt of mankind.' ' The same person also
thus of him : ' He had the profoundest
ition for the great God of heaven and
that ever I observed in any person.
ery name of God was never mentioned
n without a pause and a visible stop in
course.'

d of the strictness and exemplariness of
hole course of his life, he says; ' I
here challenge the whole tribe of liber-

¹ Burnet. ² Life, p. 22. ³ Life, p. 9:

tines, to come and view the usefulness, as well as the excellence of the Christian religion, in a life that was entirely dedicated to it.'

Against the Atheists he wrote his 'Free Inquiry into the received Notion of Nature,' (to confute the pernicious principle of ascribing effects to nature, which are only produced by the infinite power and wisdom of God;) and also his 'Essay about final Causes of Things Natural,' to show that all things in nature were made and contrived with great order, and every thing for its proper end and use, by an all-wise Creator.

Against the Deists he wrote a treatise, 'of Things above Reason,' in which he makes it appear that several things, which we judge to be contrary to reason, because above the reach of our understanding, are not therefore to be thought unreasonable, because we cannot comprehend them, since they may be apparently reasonable to a greater and more comprehensive understanding. And he wrote another treatise to show the possibility of the 'Resurrection of the same Body.'

The veneration he had for the Holy Scriptures appears not only from his studying them with great exactness, and exhorting others to do the same; but more particularly from a distinct treatise which he wrote, on purpose to defend the Scripture style, and to answer all the objections which profane and irreligious

ns have made against it. And speaking Morality, considered as a rule of life, he says, ‘ I⁴ have formerly taken pains to peruse books of Morality: yet, since they have only a power to persuade, but not to command, and sin and death do not necessarily attend the disobedience of them, they have the less influence; for since we may take the liberty to question human writers, I find that the methods they take to impose their writings upon us may serve to countenance either truth or falsehood.’

His zeal to propagate Christianity in the world appears by many and large benefactions to that end, which are enumerated in his funeral sermon. ‘ He⁵ was at the charge of the translation and impression of the New Testament into the Malayan language, which he sent over all the East Indies. He gave a noble reward to him that translated Grotius’s incomparable book of the “Truth of the Christian Religion” into Arabic, and was at the charge of a whole impression, which he took care to order to be distributed in all the countries where that language is understood. He was resolved to have carried on the impression of the New Testament in the Turkish language; but the Company thought it became them to be the doers of it, and so suffered him only to give a

⁴ Life, p. 17.

⁵ Ibid. p. 36, 37.

large share towards it. He was at seven hundred pounds charge in the edition of the Irish Bible, which he ordered to be distributed in Ireland, and he contributed largely both to the impressions of the Welsh Bible, and of the Irish Bible in Scotland. He gave during his life three hundred pounds to advance the design of propagating the Christian religion in America; and as soon as he heard that the East India Company were entertaining propositions for the like design in the East, he presently sent an hundred pounds for a beginning, and an example, but intended to carry it much further, when it should be set on foot to purpose. He had designed, though some accidents did, upon great considerations, divert him from settling it during his life, but not from ordering it by his will, that a liberal provision should be made for one, who should, in a very few well digested sermons every year set forth the truth of the Christian religion in general, without descending to the subdivisions amongst Christians; and who should be changed every third year, that so this noble study and employment might pass through many hands, by which means many might become masters of the argument.'

In his younger years he had thoughts of entering into holy orders, and one reason that *determined him against it* was, that he be-

lieved he might, in some respects, be more serviceable to religion by continuing a layman; ‘his⁶ having no interests, with relation to religion, besides those of saving his own soul, gave him, as he thought, a more unsuspected authority in writing or acting on that side. He knew the profane crew fortified themselves against all that was said by men of our profession, with this, that it was their trade, and that they were paid for it: he hoped, therefore, that he might have the more influence, the less he shared in the patrimony of the church.’

Mr. LOCKE, whose accurate talent in reasoning is so much celebrated even by the Sceptics and Infidels of our times, showed his zeal for Christianity, first, in his middle age, by publishing a discourse on purpose to demonstrate the reasonableness of believing Jesus to be the promised Messiah; and, after that, in the last years of his life, by a very judicious Commentary upon several of the Epistles of St. Paul.

He speaks of the miracles wrought by our Saviour and his Apostles, in the strongest manner, both as facts unexceptionably true, and as the clearest evidences of a divine mission. His words are these: ‘The⁷ evidence of our Saviour’s mission from heaven is so

⁶ Life, p. 37. ⁷ Reasonableness, &c. p. 256.

great in the multitude of his miracles he did before all sorts of people, (which the Divine Providence and Wisdom has so ordered, that they never were nor could be denied by any of the enemies and opposers of Christianity,) that what he delivered cannot but be received as the oracles of God, and unquestionable verity.' And again; 'After⁸ his resurrection, he sent his Apostles amongst the nations, accompanied with miracles ; which were done in all parts so frequently, and before so many witnesses of all sorts, in broad day light, that, as I have often observed, the enemies of Christianity have never dared to deny them, no, not Julian himself; who neither wanted skill nor power to inquire into the truth; nor would have failed to have proclaimed and exposed it, if he could have detected any falsehood in the history of the Gospel, or found the least ground to question the matter of fact published by Christ and his Apostles. The number and evidence of the miracles done by our Saviour and his followers, by the power and force of truth, bore down this mighty and accomplished Emperor, and all his parts, in his own dominions. He durst not deny so plain matter of fact; which being granted, the truth of our Saviour's doctrine and mission unavoidably follows, notwithstanding whatso-

⁸ Reasonableness, &c. p. 263.

PREFACE.

artful suggestions his wit
alice should offer to the conti
To those who ask, ‘What
of a Saviour? what advantag
Jesus Christ?’ Mr. Locke
enough to justify the fitness
be done by resolving it into
God, who has done it; where
understandings and short view
incapacitate us to judge. W
this visible, and nothing at a
of that intellectual world, (wher
numbers and degrees of spiri
reach of our ken or guess),
know not what transactions
tween God and our Saviour,
his kingdom. We know not v
was to set up a head and a chi
sition to “the prince of this w
of the power of the air,” &c.
are more than obscure intimacie
And we shall take too much
shall call God’s wisdom or pr
count, and pertly condemn f
that our weak, and perhaps
standing cannot account for.’
shows at large the necessity th
Gospel Revelation⁹, to deliver
the miserable state of darkness

⁹ *Reasonableness, &c.* p. 255.

that mankind were in ; 1. As to the true knowledge of God¹¹; 2. As to the worship to paid him¹²; 3. As to the duties to be formed to him¹³. To which he adds mighty aids and encouragements to the performance of our duty ; 1. From the assurance the Gospel gives of future rewards and punishments¹⁴; and, 2. From the promise of the Spirit of God to direct and assist us¹⁵.

The Holy Scriptures are every where mentioned by him with the greatest reverence ; he calls them the ‘Holy’¹⁶ Books,’ ‘the sacred Text,’ ‘Holy Writ,’ and ‘Divine revelation ;’ and exhorts Christians ‘to’¹⁷ be themselves in earnest to the study of the word of salvation, in these Holy Writings, which God has revealed it from heaven, and proposed it to the world ; seeking our rest where we are sure it is in truth to be, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. And, in a letter written, the year before his death, to one who had asked this question, ‘What is the shortest and surest way for a young gentleman to attain to a true knowledge of the Christian religion, in the full extent of it?’ his answer is, ‘Let him

¹¹ Reasonableness, &c. p. 257. ¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid. p. 282. ¹⁴ Ibid. p. 284. ¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Pref. to Comment. ¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Poets Works, p. 344.

.....

Scripture, especially the New Testa-

Therein are contained the words of
nal life. It has God for its author; sal-
tion for its end; and truth, without any
mixture of error, for its matter.' A direction
that was copied from his own practice¹⁹, in
the latter part of his life, and after his retire-
ment from business; when, for fourteen or
fifteen years, he applied himself especially to
'the study of the Holy Scriptures, and em-
ployed the last years of his life hardly in
any thing else. He was never weary of ad-
miring the great views of that Sacred Book,
and the just relation of all its parts. He every
day made discoveries in it, that gave him fresh
cause of admiration.'

Of St. Paul in particular, upon several of
whose Epistles he drew up a most useful Com-
mentary, he says, 'That²⁰ he was miracu-
lously called to the ministry of the Gospel,
and declared to be a chosen vessel;—that he
had the whole doctrine of the Gospel from
God by immediate revelation;—that for his in-
formation in the Christian knowledge, and the
mysteries and depths of the dispensation of
God by Jesus Christ, God himself had con-
descended to be his instructor and teacher;
—that he had received the light of the Gos-
pel from the Fountain and Father of Light

¹⁹ Posth. Works, p. 20.

²⁰ Comment. p. 16.

himself;—and, ‘that an exact observation of his reasonings and inferences is the only safe guide for the right understanding of him, under the Spirit of God, that directed these Sacred Writings²¹.’

And the death of this great man was agreeable to his life. For we are informed²², by one who was with him when he died, and had lived in the same family for seven years before, that the day before his death he particularly ‘exhorted²³ all about him to read the Holy Scriptures;’ that he desired ‘to be remembered by them at evening prayers;’ and being told, that, if he would, the whole family should come and pray by him in his chamber, he answered, ‘he should be very glad to have it so, if it would not give too much trouble;’ that an occasion offering to speak ‘of the goodness of God, he especially exalted the love which God showed to man, in justifying him by faith in Jesus Christ; and returned God thanks in particular for having called him to the knowledge of that divine Saviour.’

About two months before his death he drew up a letter to a certain gentleman²⁴, (who afterwards distinguished himself by a very different way of thinking and writing,) and

²¹ *Comment.* p. 17. ²² *Posth. Works*, p. 21.

²³ *Posth. Works*, p. 20, 21. ²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 328.

direction upon it: ‘To be delivered after my decease.’ In it are these remarkable words:—‘This life is a scene of misery, that soon passes away, and affords no satisfaction, but in the consciousness of hell, and in the hopes of another life. What I can say upon experience, and you will find to be true, when you come up the account.’

MR NEWTON, universally acknowledged the ablest philosopher and mathematician at this, or perhaps any other nation has ed, is also well known to have been a believer, and a serious Christian. His inquiries concerning the frame and system of the universe were applied by him, as Mr. Hume observes, to detect against Atheists of all kinds, the absurdity of a God, and to illustrate his power and wisdom in ‘the creation of the world.’ Such a better account cannot be given, than the words of an ingenious person, who was much conversant in his philosophical works: ‘At’^a the end of his mathematical treatise of natural philosophy, he has given some thoughts concerning the Deity. Wherein he observes, that the similitude found in the parts of the universe makes it undoubted, that the whole is governed by one Supreme

^a View of his Philosophy, p. 405.

Being, to whom the original is owing of the frame of nature, which evidently is the effect of choice and design. He then proceeds briefly to state the best metaphysical notions concerning God. In short, we cannot conceive either of space or time otherwise than as necessarily existing; this Being therefore, on whom all others depend, must certainly exist by the same necessity of nature. Consequently wherever space and time is found, there God must also be. And as it appears impossible to us, that space should be limited, or that time should have had a beginning, the Deity must be both immense and eternal.'

This great man applied himself with the utmost attention to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and considered the several parts of them with an uncommon exactness; particularly as to the order of time, and the series of prophecies and events relating to the Messiah. Upon which head he left behind him an elaborate discourse, to prove that famous prophecy of Daniel's weeks, which has been so industriously perverted by Deists of our times, was an express prop of the coming of the Messiah, and fulfill Jesus Christ.

Mr. ADDISON, so deservedly celebrated for an uncommon accuracy in thinking and reasoning, has given abundant proof of his belief of Christianity, and his zeal

Infidels of all kinds, in the writings that are here published; of which it is certainly known, that a great part of them were his own compositions.

I mention not these great names, nor the testimonies they have given of their firm belief of the truth of Christianity, as if the evidences of our religion were to be finally resolved into human authority, or tried in any other way than by the known and established rules of right reason: but my design in mentioning them is,

1. To show the very great assurance of those, who would make the belief of Revelation inconsistent with the due use of our reason; when they have known so many eminent instances in our own time, of the greatest masters of reason, not only believing Revelation, but zealously concerned to establish and propagate the belief of it.

2. The remembrance of this will also be a means, on one hand, to hinder well-meaning people from being misled by the vain boasts of our modern pretenders to reason; and, on the other hand, to check the inclination of the wicked and vicious to be misled; when both of them have before their eyes such fresh and eminent instances of sound reasoning and a firm faith joined together in one and the same mind.

3. Further, as these were persons generally

~~not to the~~
not under the influence ..

, finally, as they are all laymen,
room for the enemies of Revealed
to allege, that they were prejudiced
st, or secular considerations of any
suggestion, that has really no weight,
ged against the writings of the clergy
ace of Revelation, since they do no
o be trusted upon their own authority
on the reasons they offer ; and lawye
ysicians are not less trusted, becau
re by their professions : but it is a si
, that easily takes hold of weak mir
ocially such as catch at objections,
-ht by them. And,

volumes, with marks of distinction at the end of many of them, to point out the writers. Mr. Addison's are there distinguished by some one of the letters of the word CLIO; and the same marks of distinction are here continued; as are also the rest, where any letter was found at the end of the discourse.

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THE
EVIDENCES
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

SECTION I.

1. General division of the following discourse, with regard to Pagan and Jewish authors, who mention particulars relating to our Saviour.
2. Not probable that any such should be mentioned by Pagan writers who lived at the same time, from the nature of such transactions:
3. Especially when related by the Jews;
4. And heard at a distance by those who pretended to as great miracles of their own.
5. Besides that, no Pagan writers of that age lived in Judea, or its confines;
6. And because many books of that age are lost.
7. An instance of one record proved to be authentic.
8. A second record of probable, though not undoubted authority.

1. THAT I may lay before you a full state of the subject under our consideration, and methodise the several particulars that I touched upon in discourse with you; I shall first take notice of such Pagan authors as have given their testimony to the history of our Saviour; reduce these authors under their respective

classes, and show what authority monies carry with them. Second take notice of Jewish * authors in light.

2. There are many reasons should not expect that matters wonderful nature should be taken by those eminent Pagan writers, contemporaries with Jesus Christ, o who lived before his disciples had appeared among them, and ascer report which had gone abroad co life so full of miracles.

Supposing such things had hap this day in Switzerland, or amon sons, who make a greater figure i than Judea did in the Roman emp they be immediately believed by live at a great distance from them any certain account of them be t into foreign countries, within so sh of time as that of our Saviour's pul try? Such kinds of news, thought true, seldom gain credit, till some they are transacted and exposed t mination of the curious, who, by la ther circumstances, attestations, and of those who are concerned in th receive, or reject, what at first non witnesses could absolutely believe

* The Author did not live to write this

. . In a case of this sort, it was natural
gen of sense and learning to treat the
e account as fabulous, or, at farthest, to
nd their belief of it, until all things
. together in their full light.

Besides, the Jews were branded not
for superstitions different from all the
ons of the Pagan world, but in a par-
ir manner ridiculed for being a credulous
le; so that whatever reports of such a
e came out of that country, were looked
as false, frivolous, and improbable.

We may further observe, that the ordi-
practice of magic in those times, with
many pretended prodigies, divinations,
ritions, and local miracles among the
ens, made them less attentive to such
from Judea, till they had time to con-
the nature, the occasion, and the end
ir Saviour's miracles, and were awakened
any surprising events to allow them any
lderation at all.

We are indeed told by St. Matthew,
the fame of our Saviour, during his life,
throughout all Syria, and that there
wed him great multitudes of people from
lee, Judea, Decapolis, Idumæa, from be-
l Jordan, and from Tyre and Sidon.
had there been any historians of those
s and places, we might have expected to
seen in them some account of those won-

THE EVIDENCES OF

terful transactions in Judea ; but there is, not
ly single author extant, in any kind, of that
ge, in any of those countries.

6. How many books have perished, in
hich possibly there might have been mention
our Saviour? Look among the Romans,
ow few of their writings are come down to
ir times! In the space of two hundred
ars from our Saviour's birth, when there
as such a multitude of writers in all kinds,
ow small is the number of authors that have
ade their way to the present age!

7. One authentic record, and that the most
ithentic heathen record, we are pretty sure
lost: I mean the account sent by the go-
ernor of Judea, under whom our Saviour
as judged, condemned, and crucified. It
as the custom in the Roman empire, as it
to this day in all the governments of the
orld, for the *præfects* and vice-roys of dis-
nt provinces to transmit to their sovereign a
mmary relation of every thing remarkable
their administration. That Pontius Pilate,

his account, would have touched on so
traordinary an event in Judea, is not to b-
dubted; and that he actually did, we learn
om Justin Martyr, who lived about a hun-
ed years after our Saviour's death, resided
ade converts, and suffered martyrdom
me, where he was engaged with phil-
us, and in a particular manner wit-

cens the Cynic, who could easily have detected, and would not fail to have exposed him, had he quoted a record not in being, or made any false citation out of it. Would the great Apologist have challenged Crescens to dispute the cause of Christianity with him before the Roman Senate, had he forged such an evidence? or would Crescens have refused the challenge, could he have triumphed over him in the detection of such a forgery? To which we must add, that the *Apology*, which appeals to this record, was presented to a learned emperor, and to the whole body of the Roman senate. This father, in his *Apology*, speaking of the death and suffering of our Saviour, refers the emperor for the truth of what he says to the acts of Pontius Pilate, which I have here mentioned. Tertullian, who wrote his *Apology* about fifty years after Justin, doubtless referred to the same record, when he tells the governor of Rome, that the Emperor Tiberius having received an account out of Palestine in Syria of the Divine Person, who had appeared in that country, paid him a particular regard, and threatened to punish any who should accuse the Christians; nay, that the emperor would have adopted him among the deities whom they worshipped, *had not the senate refused to come into his proposal.* Tertullian, who gives us this his-

tory, was not only one of the most learned men of his age, but, what adds greater weight to his authority in this case, was eminently skilful and well read in the laws of the Roman empire. Nor can it be said, that Tertullian grounded his quotation upon the authority of Justin Martyr, because we find he mixes it with matters of fact which are not related by that author. Eusebius mentions the same ancient record, but as it was not extant in his time, I shall not insist upon his authority in this point. If it be objected, that this particular is not mentioned in any Roman historian, I shall use the same argument in a parallel case, and see whether it will carry any force with it. Ulpian, the great Roman lawyer, gathered together all the imperial edicts that have been made against the Christians. But did any one ever say, that there had been no such edicts, because they were not mentioned in the histories of those emperors? Besides, who knows but this circumstance of Tiberius was mentioned in other historians that have been lost, though not to be found in any still extant? Has not Suetonius many particulars of this emperor omitted by Tacitus, and Herodian many that are not so much as hinted at by either? And for the spurious acts of Pilate, now extant, we know the occasion and time of their writing; and had there not been a true and

As record of this nature, they would never have been forged.

8. The story of Abgarus, king of Edessa, relating to the letter which he sent to our Saviour, and to that which he received from him, is a record of great authority; and though I will not insist upon it, I may venture to say, that, had we such an evidence for any fact in Pagan history, an author would be thought very unreasonable who should reject it. I believe you will be of my opinion, if you will peruse, with other authors; who have appeared in vindication of these letters as genuine, the additional arguments which have been made use of by the late famous and learned Dr. Grabe, in the second volume of his Spicilegium.

SECTION II.

1. What facts in the history of our Saviour might be taken notice of by Pagan authors.
 2. What particular facts are taken notice of, and by what Pagan authors.
 3. How Celsus represented our Saviour's miracles.
 4. The same representation made of them by other unbelievers, and proved unreasonable.
 5. What facts in our Saviour's history not to be expected from Pagan writers.
1. We now come to consider what undoubted authorities are extant among Pagan writers; *and here we must premise, that some parts of our Saviour's history may be reasonably*

expected from Pagans. I mean such parts as might be known to those who lived at a distance from Judea, as well as to those who were the followers and eye-witnesses of Christ.

2. Such particulars are most of these which follow, and which are all attested by some one or other of those Heathen authors, who lived in or near the age of our Saviour and his disciples. ‘That Augustus Cæsar had ordered the whole Empire to be censed or taxed,’ which brought our Saviour’s reputed parents to Bethlehem: this is mentioned by several Roman historians, as Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dion. ‘That a great light, or a new star, appeared in the east, which directed the wise men to our Saviour:’ this is recorded by Chalcidius. ‘That Herod, the King of Palestine, so often mentioned in the Roman history, made a great slaughter of innocent children,’ being so jealous of his successor, that he put to death his own sons on that account: this character of him is given by several historians, and this cruel fact mentioned by Macrobius, a heathen author, who tells it as a known thing, without any mark or doubt upon it. ‘That our Saviour had been in Egypt:’ this Celsus, though he raises a monstrous story upon it, is so far from denying, that he tells us our Saviour learned the arts of magic in that country. ‘That Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea; that our Saviour was brought in judgment before him, and by him condemned and crucified?’ this

is recorded by Tacitus. ‘That many miraculous cures, and works out of the ordinary course of nature, were wrought by him:’ this is confessed by Julian the Apostate, Porphyry, and Hierocles, all of them not only Pagans, but professed enemies and persecutors of Christianity. ‘That our Saviour foretold several things, which came to pass according to his predictions:’ this was attested by Phlegon, in his annals, as we are assured by the learned Origen against Celsus. ‘That at the time when our Saviour died, there was a miraculous darkness, and a great earthquake:’ this is recorded by the same Phlegon, the Trallian, who was likewise a Pagan, and freeman to Adrian the Emperor. We may here observe, that a native of Trallium, which was not situate at so great a distance from Palestine, might very probably be informed of such remarkable events as had passed among the Jews, in the age immediately preceding his own times, since several of his countrymen, with whom he had conversed, might have received a confused report of our Saviour before his crucifixion, and probably lived within the shake of the earthquake, and the shadow of the eclipse, which are recorded by this author. ‘That Christ was worshipped as a God among the Christians; that they would rather suffer death than blaspheme him; that they received a sacrament, and by it

entered into a vow of abstaining from sin and wickedness ;' conformable to the advice given by St. Paul; ' that they had private assemblies of worship, and used to join together in hymns :' this is the account which Pliny the younger gives of Christianity in his days, about seventy years after the death of Christ; and which agrees in all its circumstances with the accounts we have in holy writ, of the first state of Christianity after the crucifixion of our blessed Saviour. ' That St. Peter, whose miracles are many of them recorded in holy writ, did many wonderful works,' is owned by Julian the Apostate, who therefore represents him as a great magician, and one who had in his possession a book of magical secrets, left him by our Saviour. ' That the devils or evil spirits were subject to them,' we may learn from Porphyry, who objects to Christianity, that, since Jesus had begun to be worshipped, Æsculapius and the rest of the gods did no more converse with men. Nay, Celsus himself affirms the same thing in effect, when he says, that the power which seemed to reside in Christians proceeded from the use of certain names, and the invocation of certain dæmons. Origen remarks on this passage, that the author doubtless hints at those Christians, who put to flight evil spirits, and healed those who were possessed with them ; *a fact which had been often seen, and which*

he himself had seen, as he declares in another part of his discourse against Celsus; but at the same time he assures us, that this miraculous power was exerted by the use of no other name but that of Jesus, to which were added several passages in his history, but nothing like any invocation to dæmons.

3. Celsus was so hard set with the report of our Saviour's miracles, and the confident attestations concerning him, that though he often intimates he did not believe them to be true, yet, knowing he might be silenced in such an answer, provides himself with another retreat, when beaten out of this; namely, that our Saviour was a magician. Thus he compares the feeding of so many thousands at two different times with a few loaves and fishes, to the magical feasts of those Egyptian impostors, who would present their spectators with visionary entertainments, that had in them neither substance nor reality: which, by the way, is to suppose, that a hungry and fainting multitude were filled by an apparition, or strengthened and refreshed with shadows. He knew very well that there were so many witnesses and actors, if I may call them such, in these two miracles, that it was impossible to refute such multitudes, who had doubtless sufficiently spread the fame of them, and *was therefore in this place forced to resort to the other solution, that it was done by magic.*

It was not enough to say, that a miracle, which appeared to so many thousand eye-witnesses, was a forgery of Christ's disciples, and therefore, supposing them to be eye-witnesses, he endeavours to show how they might be deceived.

4. The unconverted Heathens, who were pressed by the many authorities that confirmed our Saviour's miracles, as well as the unbelieving Jews, who had actually seen them, were driven to account for them after the same manner: for, to work by magic, in the heathen way of speaking, was in the language of the Jews to cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. Our Saviour, who knew that unbelievers in all ages would put this perverse interpretation on his miracles, has branded the malignity of those men, who, contrary to the dictates of their own hearts, started such an unreasonable objection, as a blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and declared not only the guilt, but the punishment of so black a crime. At the same time he condescended to show the vanity and emptiness of this objection against his miracles, by representing that they evidently tended to the destruction of those powers, to whose assistance the enemies of his doctrine then ascribed them. An argument, which, if *duly weighed*, renders the objection so very *frivolous and groundless*, that we may ven-

ture to call it even blasphemy against common sense. Would magic endeavour to draw off the minds of men from the worship which was paid to stocks and stones, to give them an abhorrence of those evil spirits, who rejoiced in the most cruel sacrifices, and in offerings of the greatest impurity; and, in short, to call upon mankind to exert their whole strength in the love and adoration of that one Being, from whom they derived their existence, and on whom only they were taught to depend every moment for the happiness and continuance of it? Was it the business of magic to humanize our natures with compassion, forgiveness, and all the instances of the most extensive charity? Would evil spirits contribute to make men sober, chaste, and temperate, and, in a word, to produce that reformation, which was wrought in the moral world by those doctrines of our Saviour, that received their sanction from his miracles? Nor is it possible to imagine, that evil spirits would enter into a combination with our Saviour to cut off all their correspondence and intercourse with mankind, and to prevent any for the future from addicting themselves to those rites and ceremonies, which had done them so much honour. We see the early effect which Christianity had on the minds of men in this particular, by that number of books, which were filled with the secrets of magic, and made a sacrifice to

Christianity, by the converts mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. We have likewise an eminent instance of the inconsistency of our religion with magic, in the history of the famous Aquila. This person, who was a kinsman of the Emperor Trajan, and likewise a man of great learning, notwithstanding he had embraced Christianity, could not be brought off from the studies of magic, by the repeated admonitions of his fellow-christians; so that at length they expelled him ~~from~~ their society, as rather choosing to lose the reputation of so considerable a proselyte, than communicate with one who dealt in such dark and infernal practices. Besides, we may observe, that all the favourers of magic were the most professed and bitter enemies to the Christian Religion. Not to mention Simon Magus, and many others, I shall only take notice of those two great persecutors of Christianity, the Emperors Adrian and Julian the Apostate, both of them initiated in the mysteries of divination, and skilled in all the depths of magic. I shall only add, that evil spirits cannot be supposed to have concurred in the establishment of a religion, which triumphed over them, drove them out of the places they possessed, and divested them of their influence on mankind; nor would I mention this particular, though it be unanimously reported by all the ancient Christian authors, did it not appear, from the auth-

rities above cited, that this was a fact confessed by heathens themselves.

5. We now see what a multitude of Pagan testimonies may be produced for all those remarkable passages, which might have been expected from them, and, indeed, of several that I believe do more than answer your expectation, as they were not subjects in their own nature so exposed to public notoriety. It cannot be expected they should mention particulars which were transacted among the disciples only, or among some few even of the disciples themselves; such as the transfiguration, the agony in the garden, the appearance of Christ after his resurrection, and others of the like nature. It was impossible for a heathen author to relate these things; because, if he had believed them, he would no longer have been a heathen, and by that means his testimony would not have been thought of so much validity. Besides, his very report of facts so favourable to Christianity would have prompted men to say that he was probably tainted with their doctrine. We have a parallel case in Hecatæus, a famous Greek historian, who had several passages in his book conformable to the history of the Jewish writers, which, when quoted by Josephus, as a confirmation of the Jewish history, *when his heathen adversaries could give no other answer to it, they would need*

SECTION III.

Introduction to a second list of Pagan auth
who give testimony of our Saviour.
A passage concerning our Saviour, from a lea
Athenian.

His conversion from Paganism to Christi
makes his evidence stronger than if he
continued a Pagan.

4. Of another Athenian philosopher conver
Christianity.

5. Why their conversion, instead of wes
tianity.

6. Their belief in our Saviour's history fo
first upon the principles of historical
fair testimonies extended to all the
Saviour's history ; Evangelists.

Christianity in the three first centuries, because those were the times in which men had the best means of informing themselves of the truth of our Saviour's history, and because among the great number of philosophers who came in afterwards under the reigns of Christian emperors, there might be several who did it partly out of worldly motives.

2. Let us now suppose, that a learned heathen writer, who lived within sixty years of our Saviour's crucifixion, after having shown that false miracles were generally wrought in obscurity, and before few or no witnesses, speaking of those which were wrought by our Saviour, has the following passage: 'But his works were always seen, because they were true; they were seen by those who were healed, and by those who were raised from the dead. Nay, these persons who were thus healed, and raised, were seen not only at the time of their being healed, and raised, but long afterwards. Nay, they were not seen only all the while our Saviour was upon earth, but survived after his departure out of this world; nay, some of them were living in our days.'

3. I dare say you would look upon this as a glorious attestation for the cause of Christianity, had it come from the hand of a famous Athenian philosopher. These for

mentioned words, however, words of one who lived after our Saviour's crucifixion, a famous philosopher in Athens said, he was a convert to Christianity. Consider this matter impartially; his testimony is not much in reason. Had he continued a philosopher, would not the world have known he was not sincere in what he believed? for if so, would he not have told us he would have embraced Christianity? This was, indeed, the case with the man: he had so thorough a knowledge of the truth of our Saviour's history, and of the consistency of that religion which he was so entirely convinced of, that he became a proselyte, and died.

4. Aristides was an Athenian, and at the same time famed for wisdom, but converted to Christianity. His conversion cannot be questioned that he approved the apology of Quintus of Smyrna, which is the passage just now cited. In an apology of his to the emperor, on the same subject, though now lost, was extant in the year A.D. 870. Ado Vinnensis, A. D. 870, in his history of the church, relates that he was esteemed by the most learned author of that age, and that author witnesses. It contained great arguments for

Saviour's history, because in it he asserted the divinity of our Saviour, which could not but engage him in the proof of his miracles.

5. I do allow that, generally speaking, a man is not so acceptable and unquestioned an evidence in facts which make for the advancement of his own party. But we must consider, that, in the case before us, the persons to whom we appeal were of an opposite party, till they were persuaded of the truth of those very facts which they report. They bear evidence to a history in defence of Christianity, the truth of which history was their motive to embrace Christianity. They attest facts which they had heard while they were yet heathens; and had they not found reason to believe them, they would still have continued heathens, and have made no mention of them in their writings.

6. When a man is born under Christian parents, and trained up in the profession of that religion from a child, he generally guides himself by the rules of Christian faith, in believing what is delivered by the Evangelists: but the learned Pagans of antiquity, before they became Christians, were only guided by the common rules of historical faith; that is, they examined the nature of the evidence which was to be met with in *common fame, tradition, and the writings of those persons who related them, together with*

the number, concurrence, veracity, and private characters of those persons; and being convinced upon all accounts that they had the same reason to believe the history of our Saviour, as that of any other person, to which they themselves were not actually eye-witnesses, they were bound, by all the rules of historical faith, and of right reason, to give credit to this history. This they did accordingly, and in consequence of it published the same truths themselves, suffered many afflictions, and very often death itself, in the assertion of them. When I say, that an historical belief of the acts of our Saviour induced these learned Pagans to embrace his doctrine, I do not deny that there were many other motives, which conduced to it; as the excellency of his precepts, the fulfilling of prophecies, the miracles of his disciples, the irreproachable lives and magnanimous sufferings of their followers, with other considerations of the same nature: but whatever other collateral arguments wrought more or less with philosophers of that age, it is certain that a belief in the history of our Saviour was one motive with every new convert, and that upon which all others turned, as being the very basis and foundation of Christianity.

7. To this I must further add, that as we have already seen many particular facts which are recorded in Holy Writ, atteste-

by particular Pagan authors ; the testimony of those I am now going to produce, extends to the whole history of our Saviour, and to that continued series of actions, which are related of him and his disciples in the books of the New Testament.

8. This evidently appears from their quotations out of the Evangelists, for the confirmation of any doctrine or account of our blessed Saviour. Nay, a learned man of our nation, who examined the writings of our most ancient fathers in another view, refers to several passages in Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens of Alexandria, Origen, and Cyprian, by which he plainly shows that each of these early writers ascribed to the four Evangelists by name their respective histories ; so that there is not the least room for doubting of their belief in the history of our Saviour, as recorded in the gospels. I shall only add, that three of the five fathers here mentioned, and probably four, were Pagans converted to Christianity, as they were all of them very inquisitive and deep in the knowledge of heathen learning and philosophy.

to their conversion.

6. The names of several Pagan p
were Christian converts.

1. It happened very provide
honour of the Christian Religi
not take its rise in the dark and
of the world, but at a time
sciences were at their height, a
were men who made it the bu
lives to search after truth, and
opinions of philosophers and w
cerning the duty, the end, and
ness of reasonable creatures.

2. Several of these, therefor
had informed themselves of our
tory, and examined with

to public hatred and contempt, to sufferings of all kinds, and to death itself.

3. Of this sort we may reckon those three early converts to Christianity, who each of them was a member of a senate famous for its wisdom and learning. Joseph the Arimathean was of the Jewish Sanhedrim; Dionysius, of the Athenian Areopagus; and Flavius Clemens, of the Roman Senate; nay, at the time of his death, consul of Rome. These three were so thoroughly satisfied of the truth of the Christian Religion, that the first of them, according to all the reports of antiquity died a martyr for it: as did the second, unless we disbelieve Aristides, his fellow-citizen and contemporary; and the third, as we are informed both by Roman and Christian authors.

4. Among those innumerable multitudes, who in most of the known nations of the world came over to Christianity at its first appearance, we may be sure there were great numbers of wise and learned men, besides those whose names are in the Christian records, who without doubt took care to examine the truth of our Saviour's history, before they would leave the religion of their country and of their forefathers, for the sake of one that would not only cut them off from the allurements of this world, but subject them to every thing terrible or disagreeable

cians, lawyers, physicians, &.....
spising the sentiments they had been
of, took up their rest in the Christ-
gion.

5. Who can imagine that men
character did not thoroughly inform
selves of the history of that Person
doctrines they embraced? for, how
sonant to reason his precepts appear;
good soever were the effects which
duced in the world, nothing could
tempted men to acknowledge him
God and Saviour, but their being
persuaded of the miracles he wrought,
the many attestations of his divine

^{power} were to be met with in the

strongest collateral testimony for the truth of what is delivered concerning our Saviour.

6. Besides innumerable authors that are lost, we have the undoubted names, works, or fragments of several Pagan philosophers, which show them to have been as learned as any unconverted heathen authors of the age in which they lived. If we look into the greatest nurseries of learning in those ages of the world, we find in Athiens, Dionysius, Quadratus, Aristides, Athenagoras ; and in Alexandria, Dionysius, Clemens, Ammonius, and Anatolius, to whom we may add Origen ; for though his father was a Christian martyr, he became, without all controversy, the most learned and able philosopher of his age, by his education at Alexandria, in that famous seminary of arts and sciences.

SECTION V.

1. The learned Pagans had means and opportunities of informing themselves of the truth of our Saviour's history ;
 2. From the proceedings,
 3. The characters, sufferings,
 4. And miracles of the persons who published them.
 5. How these first Apostles perpetuated their tradition, by ordaining persons to succeed them.
 6. How their successors in the three first centuries preserved their tradition.
 7. That five generations might derive their tradition from Christ, to the end of the thirteenth century.
 8. Four eminent Christians that delivered successively to the year of our Lord 250.
 9. The faith of the four above-mentioned agrees with the same with that of the churches of the East, of the West, and of Egypt.
 10. Another person added to them, who brought the year 343, and that many other lists may be added in as direct and short a succession.
 11. Why the tradition of the three first centuries is more authentic than that of any other, proved from the conversation of the first Christians ;
 12. From the manner of initiating men into religion ;
 13. From the correspondence between the Christians and the pagans.
 14. From the long lives of several of Christian martyrs, of which two instances.
1. It now therefore only remains to consider whether these learned men had means and opportunities of informing themselves of the truth of our Saviour's history ; for unless

point can be made out, their testimonies will appear invalid, and their inquiries ineffectual.

2. As to this point, we must consider, that many thousands had seen the transactions of our Saviour in Judea, and that many hundred thousands had received an account of them from the mouths of those who were actually eye-witnesses. I shall only mention among these eye-witnesses the twelve Apostles, to whom we must add St. Paul, who had a particular call to this high office, though many other disciples and followers of Christ had also their share in the publishing this wonderful history. We learn from the ancient records of Christianity, that many of the Apostles and Disciples made it the express business of their lives, travelled into the remotest parts of the world, and in all places gathered multitudes about them, to acquaint them with the history and doctrines of their crucified Master. And indeed, were all Christian records of these proceedings entirely lost, as many have been, the effect plainly evinces the truth of them; for how else during the Apostles' lives could Christianity have spread itself with such an amazing progress through the several nations of the Roman empire? How could it fly like lightning, and carry conviction with it, from one end of the earth to the other?

3. Heathens therefore of every age, sex, and quality, born in the most different cli-

mates, and bred up under the institutions, when they saw men of without the help of learning, arm-tience and courage, instead of we or power, expressing in their lives lent doctrines of morality, which as delivered to them from our Sa ring that they had seen his mir his life, and conversed with him death ; when, I say, they saw no falsehood, treachery, or worldly their behaviour and conversation they submitted to the most ignorant, cruel deaths, rather than retract mony, or even be silent in matters were to publish by their Saviour command, there was no reason t the veracity of those facts which t or of the divine mission in which employed.

4. But even these motives to Saviour would not have been sufficient brought about in so few years such a number of conversions, had the Apostles been able to exhibit such proofs of the truths which they taught, as few persons of an odious and despised sect could not have filled the world with had they not shown undoubted evidence of the Divine Person, who sent them *a message*. Accordingly we are

they were invested with the power of working miracles, which was the most short and the most convincing argument that could be produced, and the only one that was adapted to the reason of all mankind, to the capacities of the wise and ignorant, and could overcome every cavil and every prejudice. Who would not believe that our Saviour healed the sick, and raised the dead, when it was published by those who themselves often did the same miracles in their presence, and in his name? Could any reasonable person imagine, that God Almighty would arm men with such powers to authorize a lie, and establish a religion in the world which was displeasing to him, or that evil spirits would lend them such an effectual assistance to beat down vice and idolatry?

5. When the Apostles had formed many assemblies in several parts of the Pagan world, who gave credit to the glad tidings of the Gospel, that, upon their departure, the memory of what they had related might not perish, they appointed, out of these new converts men of the best sense, and of the most unblemished lives, to preside over these several assemblies, and to inculcate without ceasing what they had heard from the mouths of these eye-witnesses.

6. Upon the death of any of those substitutes to the Apostles and Disciples of Christ,

his place was filled up with some other of eminence for his piety and learning; generally a member of the same church after his decease, was followed by another in the same manner, by which means the succession was continued in an uninterrupted series. Irenæus informs us, that every church served a catalogue of its bishops in the order that they succeeded one another; and this example, produces the catalogue of the church of Rome in the character which contains eight or nine names, though but a very small remove from those of the Apostles.

Indeed the lists of bishops, which are come down to us in other churches, are generally filled with greater numbers than one would expect. But the succession was quickened in the first three first centuries, because the bishop often ended in the martyr: for whenever persecution arose in any place, the first blow it fell upon this order of holy men, who durst not faintly testify, by their death and sufferings, that they did not undertake these offices of any temporal views, that they were born and satisfied in the belief of what they taught, and that they firmly adhered to what they had received from the Apostles, and closed down their lives in the same hope, and *for the same principles*. None can be said to be so utterly regardless of their own safety,

as to expire in torment, and hazard their eternity, to support any fables and inventions of their own, or any forgeries of their predecessors who had presided in the same church, and which might have been easily detected by the tradition of that particular church, as well as by the concurring testimony of others. To this purpose I think it is very remarkable; that there was not a single martyr among those many heretics, who disagreed with the apostolical church, and introduced several wild and absurd notions into the doctrines of Christianity. They durst not stake their present and future happiness on their own chimerical operations, and did not only shun persecution, but affirmed, that it was unnecessary for their followers to bear their religion through such fiery trials.

7. We may fairly reckon, that this first age of Apostles and Disciples, with that second generation of many, who were their immediate converts, extended itself to the middle of the second century, and that several of the third generation from these last-mentioned, which was but the fifth from Christ, continued to the end of the third century. Did we know the ages and numbers of the members in every particular church, which was planted by the Apostles, I doubt not but in most of them there might be found five persons, who in a continued series would reach

through these three centuries of years, till the 265th from the death of our Saviour.

8. Among the accounts of those very few out of innumerable multitudes, who had embraced Christianity, I shall single out four persons eminent for their lives, their writings, and their sufferings, that were successively, contemporaries, and bring us down as far as to the year of our Lord, 254. John, who was the beloved disciple, and conversed the most intimately with our Saviour, lived till anno Dom. 100. Polycarp, who was the disciple of St. John, and had conversed with others of the Apostles and Disciples of our Lord, lived till anno Dom. 167, though his life was shortened by martyrdom. Irenæus, who was the disciple of Polycarp, and had conversed with many of the immediate disciples of the Apostles, lived, by the lowest computation of his age, till the year 202, when he was likewise cut off by martyrdom; in which year the great Origines was appointed regent of the catechetic school in Alexandria; and as he was the miracle of that age, for industry, learning, and philosophy, he was looked upon as the champion of Christianity, till the year 254, when, if he did not suffer martyrdom, as some think he did, he was certainly actuated by the spirit of it, as appears in the whole course of

and writings; nay, he had often been to the torture, and had undergone trials worse than death. As he conversed with the most eminent Christians of his time in Egypt and in the East, brought over multitudes both from heresy and heathenism, and left behind him several disciples of great fame and learning, there is no question but there were considerable numbers of those who knew him, and had been his hearers, scholars, or proselytes that lived till the end of the third century, and to the reign of Constantine the Great.

¶. It is evident to those who read the lives and writings of Polycarp, Irenæus, and Origin, that these three Fathers believed the accounts which are given of our Saviour in the four Evangelists, and had undoubted arguments that not only St. John, but many others of our Saviour's Disciples, published the same accounts of him. To which we must subjoin this further remark, that what was believed by these Fathers on this subject was likewise the belief of the main body of Christians in those successive ages when they flourished; since Polycarp cannot but be looked upon, if we consider the respect that was paid him, as the representative of the eastern churches in this particular, Irenæus of the western upon the same account, and Origin of those established in Egypt.

10. To these I might add Paul, the famous hermit, who retired from the Decian persecution five or six years before Origen's death, and lived till the year 343. I have only discovered one of those channels, by which the history of our Saviour might be conveyed pure and unadulterated, through those several ages that produced those Pagan philosophers whose testimonies I make use of for the truth of our Saviour's history. Some or other of these philosophers came into the Christian faith during its infancy, in the several periods of these three first centuries, when they had such means of informing themselves in all the particulars of our Saviour's history. I must further add, that though I haye here only chosen this single link of martyrs, I might find out others among those names which are still extant, that delivered down this account of our Saviour in a successive tradition, till the whole Roman Empire became Christian: as there is no question but numberless series of witnesses might follow one another in the same order, and in as short a chain, and that perhaps in every single church, had the names and ages of the most eminent primitive Christians been transmitted to us with the like certainty.

11. But to give this consideration more force, we must take notice, that the tradition of the first ages of Christianity had seve-

circumstances peculiar to it, which made it more authentic than any other tradition in any other age of the world. The Christians, who carried their religion through so many general and particular persecutions, were incessantly comforting and supporting one another with the example and history of our Saviour and his Apostles. It was the subject not only of their solemn assemblies, but of their private visits and conversations. 'Our virgins,' says Tatian, who lived in the second century, 'discourse over their distaffs on divine subjects.' Indeed, when religion was woven into the civil government, and flourished under the protection of the Emperors, men's thoughts and discourses were, as they are now, full of secular affairs; but in the three first centuries of Christianity, men, who embraced this religion, had given up all their interests in this world, and lived in a perpetual preparation for the next, as not knowing how soon they might be called to it: so that they had little else to talk of but the life and doctrines of that Divine Person, which was their hope, their encouragement, and their glory. We cannot therefore imagine, that there was a single person, arrived at any degree of age or consideration, who had not heard and repeated above a thousand times, in his life, all the particulars of our Saviour's birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension.

12. Especially if we consider, that they could not then be received as Christians, they had undergone several examinations. Persons of riper years, who flocked into the church during the three first centuries, were obliged to pass through many repeated instructions, and give a strict account of their proficiency, before they were admitted to baptism. And as for those who were born of Christian parents, and had been baptised in their infancy, they were with the like care prepared and disciplined for confirmation, which they could not arrive at till they were found, upon examination, to have made sufficient progress in the knowledge of Christianity.

13. We must further observe, that there was not only in those times this religious conversation among private Christians, but constant correspondence between the churches that were established by the Apostles, or their successors, in the several parts of the world. If any new doctrine was started, or any false report of our Saviour, a strict enquiry was made among the churches, especially those planted by the Apostles themselves, whether they had received any such doctrine or a wrong account of our Saviour, from the mouths of the Apostles, or the tradition of those Christians who had preceded the present members of the churches, which were thus con-

this means, when any novelty was published, it was immediately detected and censured.

14. St. John, who lived so many years after our Saviour, was appealed to in these emergencies as the living oracle of the Church; and as his oral testimony lasted the first century, many have observed, that, by a particular providence of God, several of our Saviour's Disciples, and of the early converts of his religion, lived to a very great age, that they might personally convey the truth of the Gospel to those times, which were very remote from the first publication of it. Of these, besides St. John, we have a remarkable instance in Simeon, who was one of the Seventy sent forth by our Saviour, to publish the Gospel before his crucifixion, and a near kinsman of the Lord. This venerable person, who had probably heard with his own ears our Saviour's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, presided over the church established in that city, during the time of its memorable siege, and drew his congregation out of those dreadful and unparalleled calamities which befel his countrymen, by following the advice our Saviour had given, when they should see Jerusalem encompassed with armies, and the Roman standards, or abomination of desolation, set up. He lived till the year of our Lord 107, when he was martyred under the Emperor Trajan.

SECTION VI.

1. The tradition of the Apostles secured by other excellent institutions;
2. But chiefly by the writings of the Evangelists.
3. The diligence of the Disciples and first Christian converts, to send abroad these writings.
4. That the written account of our Saviour was the same with that delivered by tradition;
5. Proved from the reception of the Gospel by those Churches which were established before it was written;
6. From the uniformity of what was believed in the several Churches;
7. From a remarkable passage in Irenæus.
8. Records which are now lost, of use to the three first centuries, for confirming the history of our Saviour.
9. Instances of such records.

1. **T**HUS far we see how the learned Pagans might apprise themselves from oral information of the particulars of our Saviour's history. They could hear, in every church planted every distant part of the earth, the account which was there received and preserved among them, of the history of our Saviour. They could learn the names and characters of the first missionaries that brought to them these accounts, and the miracles by which God Almighty attested their reports. But the Apostles and Disciples of Christ, to preserve the history of his life, and to secure the accounts of him from error and oblivion, *not only set aside certain persons for that;*

, as has been already shown, but appropriated certain days to the commemoration of those facts, which they had related concerning him. The first day of the week was, in all its returns, a perpetual memorial of his resurrection, as the devotional exercises adapted to Friday and Saturday were to denote to all ages that he was crucified on the one of those days, and that he rested in the grave on the other. You may apply the same remark to several of the annual festivals instituted by the Apostles themselves, or, at furthest, by their immediate successors, in memory of the most important particulars in our Saviour's history; to which we must add the sacraments instituted by our Lord himself, and many of those rites and ceremonies, which obtained in the most early times of the Church. These are to be regarded as standing marks of such facts as were delivered by those, who were eye-witnesses to them, and which were contrived with great wisdom to last till time should be no more. These, without any other means, might have, in some measure, conveyed to posterity the memory of several transactions in the history of our Saviour, as they were related by his Disciples. At least the reason of these institutions, though they might be forgotten, and obscured by a long course of years, could not but be very well known by those who lived in the three first centuries,

and a means of informing the inquisitive Pagans in the truth of our Saviour's history, that being the view in which I am to consider them.

2. But lest such a tradition, though guarded by so many expedients, should wear out by the length of time, the four Evangelists, within about fifty, or, as Theordoret affirms, thirty years after our Saviour's death, while the memory of his actions was fresh among them, consigned to writing that history, which for some years had been published only by the mouths of Apostles and Disciples. The further consideration of these holy penmen will fall under another part of this discourse.

3. It will be sufficient to observe here, that in the age which succeeded the Apostles, many of their immediate Disciples sent or carried in person the books of the four Evangelists, which had been written by Apostles, or at least approved by them, to most of the churches which they had planted in the different parts of the world. This was done with so much diligence, that when Pantænus, a man of learning and piety, had travelled into India for the propagation of Christianity, about the year of our Lord 200, he found among that remote people the Gospel of St. Matthew, which, upon his return from that country, he brought with him to Alexandria. This Gospel is generally supposed to have been left

se parts by St. Bartholomew, the Apostle of the Indies, who probably carried it with him before the writings of the three other Evangelists were published.

4. That the history of our Saviour, as recorded by the Evangelists, was the same with that which had been before delivered by the Apostles and Disciples, will further appear in the prosecution of this discourse, and may be gathered from the following considerations.

5. Had these writings differed from the sermons of the first planters of Christianity, either in history or doctrine, there is no question but they would have been rejected by those churches which they had already formed. But so consistent and uniform was the relation of the Apostles, that these histories appeared to be nothing else but their tradition and oral attestations made fixed and permanent. Thus was the fame of our Saviour, which in so few years had gone through the whole earth, confirmed and perpetuated by such records, as would preserve the traditional account of him to after-ages; and rectify it, if at any time, by passing through several generations, it might drop any part that was material, or contract any thing that was false or fictitious.

6. Accordingly we find the same Jesus Christ, who was born of a Virgin, who had wrought many miracles in Palestine, who was

crucified, rose again, and ascended into heaven ; I say, the same Jesus Christ had been preached, and was worshipped, in Germany, France, Spain, and Great Britain, in Parthia, Media, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia, Asia, and Pamphylia, in Italy, Egypt, Afric, and beyond Cyrene, India and Persia, and, in short, in all the islands and provinces that are visited by the rising or setting sun. The same account of our Saviour's life and doctrine was delivered by thousands of preachers and believed in thousands of places, who all, as fast as it could be conveyed to them, received the same account in writing from the four Evangelists.

7. Irenæus to this purpose very aptly remarks, that those barbarous nations, who in his time were not possessed of the written Gospels, and had only learned the history of our Saviour from those who had converted them to Christianity before the Gospels were written, had among them the same accounts of our Saviour, which are to be met with in the four Evangelists. An uncontestable proof of the harmony and concurrence between the Holy Scripture and the tradition of the churches in those early times of Christianity.

8. Thus we see what opportunities the learned and inquisitive Heathens had of *informing themselves of the truth of our Saviour's history, during the three first centuries*

especially as they lay nearer one than another to the fountain head: besides which, there were many uncontroverted traditions, records of Christianity, and particular histories, that then threw light into these matters, but are now entirely lost, by which, at that time, any appearance of contradiction, or seeming difficulties in the history of the Evangelists, were fully cleared up and explained: though we meet with fewer appearances of this nature in the history of our Saviour, as related by the four Evangelists, than in the accounts of any other person, published by such a number of different historians, who lived at so great a distance from the present age.

9. Among those records which are lost, and were of great use to the primitive Christians, is the letter to Tiberius, which I have already mentioned; that of Marcus Aurelius, which I shall take notice of hereafter; the writings of Hegesippus, who had drawn down the history of Christianity to his own time, which was not beyond the middle of the second century; the genuine Sibylline oracles, which in the first ages of the Church were easily distinguished from the spurious; the records preserved in particular churches, with many others of the same nature.

SECTION VII.

1. The sight of miracles in those ages a further confirmation of Pagan philosophers in the Christian faith.
2. The credibility of such miracles.
3. A particular instance.
4. Martyrdom, why considered as a standing miracle.
5. Primitive Christians thought many of the martyrs were supported by a miraculous power.
6. Proved from the nature of their sufferings.
7. How martyrs further induced the Pagans to embrace Christianity.

1. THERE were other means, which I find had a great influence on the learned of the three first centuries, to create and confirm in them the belief of our blessed Saviour's history, which ought not to be passed over in silence. The first was, the opportunity they enjoyed of examining those miracles, which were on several occasions performed by Christians, and appeared in the Church, more or less, during these first ages of Christianity. These had great weight with the men I am now speaking of, who, from learned Pagans, became Fathers of the church; for they frequently boast of them in their writings, as attestations given by God himself to the truth of their religion.

2. At the same time that these learned men declare how disingenuous, base, and wicked it would be, how much beneath the dignity o

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philosophy, and contrary to the principles of Christianity, to utter falsehoods or for the support of a cause, though never in itself, they confidently assert the miraculous power, which then subsisted in the Church, nay, tell us, that they themselves had been eye-witnesses of it at several times in several instances ; nay, appeal to thens themselves for the truth of several things they relate ; nay, challenge them to be at their assemblies, and satisfy them of their doubt of it ; nay, we find that the authors have, in some instances, confuted the miraculous power.

3. The letter of Marcus Aurelius to his army was preserved by a refreshing of the air at the same time that his enemies were confounded by a storm of lightning, as the Heathen historians themselves allow to have been supernatural and the effect of the gods. We may say, this letter, which ascribed this unusual assistance to the prayers of the Christians who then served in the army, would have been thought an unquestionable testimony to the miraculous power I am speaking of, if it had not been still preserved. It is sufficient for me in this place to take notice, that this was one of those miracles which had its influence upon the learned converts, because it is mentioned by Tertullian, and the very letter appears. When these learned men saw this

frenzy cured, the dead raised, the oracles put to silence, the dæmons and evil spirits forced to confess themselves no gods, by persons who only made use of prayer and adjurations in the name of their crucified Saviour; how could they doubt of their Saviour's power on the like occasions, as represented to them by the traditions of the Church, and the writings of the Evangelists?

4. Under this head, I cannot omit that which appears to me a standing miracle in the three first centuries; I mean that amazing and supernatural courage or patience, which was shewn by innumerable multitudes of martyrs, in those slow and painful torments that were inflicted on them. I cannot conceive a man placed in the burning iron chair at Lyons, amid the insults and mockeries of a crowded amphitheatre, and still keeping his seat; or stretched upon a grate of iron, over coals of fire, and breathing out his soul among the exquisite sufferings of such a tedious execution, rather than renounce his religion, or blaspheme his Saviour. Such trials seem to me above the strength of human nature, and able to overbear duty, reason, faith, conviction, nay, and the most absolute certainty of a future state. Humanity, unassisted in an extraordinary manner, must have shaken off the *present pressure*, and have delivered itself out of such a dreadful distress, by any means tha-

could have been suggested to it. We can easily imagine, that many persons in so good a cause, might have laid down their lives at the gibbet, the stake, or the block : but to expire leisurely among the most exquisite tortures, when they might come out of them, even by a mental reservation, or an hypocrisy which was not without a possibility of being followed by repentance and forgiveness, has something in it, so far beyond the force and natural strength of mortals, that one cannot but think there was some miraculous power to support the sufferer.

5. We find the church of Smyrna, in the admirable letter, which gives an account of the death of Polycarp, their beloved bishop mentioning the cruel torments of other early martyrs for Christianity, are of opinion, that our Saviour stood by them in a vision, and personally conversed with them, to give them strength and comfort during the bitterness of their long-continued agonies ; and we have the story of a young man, who, having suffered many tortures, escaped with life, and told his fellow-christians, that the pain of them had been rendered tolerable by the presence of an angel who stood by him and wiped off the tears and sweat, which ran down his face whilst he lay under his sufferings. We are assured at least, that the first martyr for Christianity was encouraged in his last moments

a vision of that Divine Person, for whom he suffered, and into whose presence he was then hastening.

6. Let any man calmly lay his hand upon his heart, and after reading these terrible conflicts, in which the ancient martyrs and confessors were engaged, when they passed through such new inventions and varieties of pain, as tired their tormentors; and ask himself, however zealous and sincere he is in his religion, whether, under such acute and lingering tortures, he could still have held fast his integrity, and have professed his faith to the last, without a supernatural assistance of some kind or other. For my part, when I consider that it was not an unaccountable obstinacy in a single man, or in any particular set of men, in some extraordinary juncture; but that there were multitudes of each sex, of every age, of different countries and conditions, who, for near 300 years together made this glorious confession of their faith in the midst of tortures, and in the hour of death; I must conclude, that they were either of another make than men are at present, or that they had such miraculous supports as were peculiar to those times of Christianity when without them perhaps the very name of it might have been extinguished.

7. It is certain, that the deaths and sufferings of the primitive Christians had a gre-

share in the conversion of those learned Pagans, who lived in the ages of persecution, which, with some intervals and abatements, lasted near 300 years after our Saviour. Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Lactantius, Arnobius, and others, tell us, that this first of all alarmed their curiosity, roused their attention, and made them seriously inquisitive into the nature of that religion, which could endue the mind with so much strength, and overcome the fear of death, nay, raise an earnest desire of it, though it appeared in all its terrors. This they found had not been effected by all the doctrines of those philosophers whom they had thoroughly studied, and who had been labouring at this great point. The sight of these dying and tormented martyrs engaged them to search into the history and doctrines of him for whom they suffered. The more they searched, the more they were convinced; till their conviction grew so strong, that they themselves embraced the same truths, and either actually laid down their lives, or were always in a readiness to do it, rather than depart from them.

SECTION VIII.

1. The completion of our Saviour's prophecies confirmed Pagans in their belief of the
2. Origen's observation on that of his being brought before kings and governors
3. On their being persecuted for their religion
4. On their preaching the Gospel to all nations
5. On the destruction of Jerusalem, and the Jewish economy.
6. These arguments strengthened by what has happened since Origen's time.

1. THE second of those extraordinary events of great use to the learned and ignorant Pagans of the three first centuries, was the truth of the history of our Saviour, which was the completion of such prophecies recorded of him in the Evangelist John, who could not indeed form any argument from what he foretold, and was fulfilled during his life, because both the prophecy and its completion were over before they were recorded by the Evangelists; though, as Origon observes, what end could there be in recording some of these predictions, as that of exposing his master, and all his disciples, by making him in the greatest extremity reflect so much shame on the greatest and on all his companions? Nothing but strict adherence to truth and to a fact, could have prompted the Evangelist to relate a circumstance so disadvantageous to the Christians.

their own reputation ; as that Father has well observed.

2. But to pursue his reflections on this subject. There are predictions of our Saviour recorded by the Evangelists, which were not completed till after their deaths, and had no likelihood of being so, when they were pronounced by our blessed Saviour. Such was that wonderful notice he gave them, that 'they should be brought before governors and kings for his sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles,' Matt. x. 28. with the other like prophecies, by which he foretold that his Disciples were to be persecuted. 'Is there any other doctrine in the world,' says this Father, 'whose followers are punished? Can the enemies of Christ say, that he knew his opinions were false and impious, and that therefore he might well conjecture and foretel what would be the treatment of those persons who should embrace them? Supposing his doctrines were really such, why should this be the consequence? What likelihood that men should be brought before kings and governors for opinions and tenets of any kind, when this never happened even to the Epicureans, who absolutely denied a Providence; nor to the Peripateticks themselves, who laughed at the prayers and sacrifices which were made to the Divinity? Are there any but the Christians, who, according to this prediction

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our Saviour, being brought before kings
governors for his sake, are pressed to their
last gasp of breath, by their respective
yes, to renounce Christianity, and to pro-
ve their liberty and rest, by offering the
same sacrifices, and taking the same oaths
as others did?

3. Consider the time when our Saviour
pronounced those words, Matt. x. 32. 'Who-
ever shall confess me before men, him will
I confess also before my Father which is in
heaven: but whosoever shall deny me before
men, him will I also deny before my Father
which is in heaven.' Had you heard him
speak after this manner, when as yet his Dis-
ciples were under no such trials, you would
certainly have said within yourself, If these
speeches of Jesus are true, and if, according
to his prediction, governors and kings under-
take to ruin and destroy those who shall pro-
fess themselves his Disciples, we will believe
not only that he is a Prophet, but that he
has received power from God sufficient
to preserve and propagate his religion; and that
he would never talk in such a peremptory
and discouraging manner, were he not aware
that he was able to subdue the most pow-
erful opposition that could be made against
the faith and doctrine which he taught.

4. Who is not struck with admiration,
when he represents to himself our Saviour?

time foretelling, that his Gospel should be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, or, as Origen, (who rather quotes the sense than the words) to serve for a conviction to kings and people, when at the same time he finds that his Gospel has accordingly been preached to Greeks and Barbarians, to the learned and to the ignorant, and that there is no quality or condition of life able to exempt men from submitting to the doctrine of Christ? ‘As for us,’ says this great author, in another part of his book against Celsus, ‘when we see every day those events exactly accomplished which our Saviour foretold at so great a distance, that “his Gospel is preached in all the world,” Matt. xxiv. 14. that “his Disciples go and teach all nations,” Matt. xxviii. 19. and that “those who have received his doctrine are brought, for his sake, before governors and before kings,” Matt. x. 18. we are filled with admiration, and our faith in him is confirmed more and more. What clearer and stronger proofs can Celsus ask for the truth of what he spoke?’

5. Origen insists likewise with great strength on that wonderful prediction of our Saviour concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, pronounced at a time, as he observes, when there was no likelihood nor appearance of it. This has been taken notice of and inculcated by so many others, that I shall refer you to what

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character, and compares ..
Saviour foretold, would think t
had been a Christian, and that he
else in view, but to adjust the
prediction.

6. I cannot quit this head wi
notice, that Origen would still ha
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How much greater confirmat
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lated by many historians of the same age, and the substance of the story testified both by Pagan and Jewish writers, as Ammianus Marcellinus, and Zamath David. The learned Chrysostom, in a sermon against the Jews, tells them this fact was then fresh in the memories even of their young men, that it happened but twenty years ago, and that it was attested by all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, where they might still see the marks of it in the rubbish of that work, from which the Jews desisted in so great a fright, and which even Julian had not the courage to carry on. This fact, which is in itself so miraculous, and so indisputable, brought over many of the Jews to Christianity, and shows us, that, after our Saviour's prophecy against it, the temple could not be preserved from the plough passing over it, by all the care of Titus, who would fain have prevented its destruction, and that, instead of being re-edified by Julian, all his endeavours towards it did but still more literally accomplish our Saviour's prediction, that 'not one stone should be left upon another.'

The ancient Christians were so entirely persuaded of the force of our Saviour's prophecies, and of the punishment which the Jews had drawn upon themselves and upon their children, for the treatment which the Messiah had received at their hands, that they did not doubt but they woud always remain an aban-

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among all the conflicts, difficulties, a
secutions, in which it was engaged, as
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their being cast out of Jerusalem, t
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rites and solemnities, and scattered
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the Jews had made such a powerful effort for their re-establishment under Barcochab, in the reign of Adrian, as shook the whole Roman empire. But he founded his opinion on a sure word of prophecy, and on the punishment they had so justly incurred; and we find, by a long experience of 1500 years, that he was not mistaken, nay, that his opinion gathers strength daily, since the Jews are now at a greater distance from any probability of such a re-establishment, than they were when Origin wrote.

SECTION IX.

1. The lives of primitive Christians, another means of bringing learned Pagans into their religion.
2. The change and reformation of their manners.
3. This looked upon as supernatural by the learned Pagans;
4. And strengthened the accounts given of our Saviour's life and history.
5. The Jewish prophecies of our Saviour an argument for the Heathens' belief:
6. Pursued.
7. Pursued.

1. THERE was one other means enjoyed by the learned Pagans of the three first centuries, for satisfying them in the truth of our Saviour's history, which I might have flung under one of the foregoing heads: but as it is so shining a particular, and does so much

honour to our religion, I shall make a distinct article of it, and only consider it with regard to the subject I am upon: I mean the lives and manners of those holy men who believed in Christ during the first ages of Christianity. I should be thought to advance a paradox, should I affirm, that there were more Christians in the world during those times of persecution, than there are at present in these, which we call the flourishing times of Christianity. But this will be found an indisputable truth, if we form our calculation upon the opinions which prevailed in those days, that every one who lives in the habitual practice of any voluntary sin, actually cuts himself off from the benefits and profession of Christianity, and, whatever he may call himself, is in reality no Christian, nor ought to be esteemed as such.

2. In the times we are now surveying, the Christian Religion showed its full force and efficacy on the minds of men, and by many examples demonstrated what great and generous souls it was capable of producing. It exalted and refined its proselytes to a very high degree of perfection, and set them far above the pleasures and even the pains of this life. It strengthened the infirmity, and broke the fierceness of human nature. It *lifted up the minds of the ignorant to the knowledge and worship of him that made*

them, and inspired the vicious with a rational devotion, a strict purity of heart, and an unbounded love to their fellow-creatures. In proportion as it spread through the world, it seemed to change mankind into another species of beings. No sooner was a convert initiated into it, but by an easy figure he became a new man, and both acted and looked upon himself as one regenerated and born a second time into another state of existence.

3. It is not my business to be more particular in the accounts of primitive Christianity, which have been exhibited so well by others, but rather to observe, that the Pagan converts, of whom I am now speaking, mention this great reformation of those who had been the greatest sinners, with that sudden and surprising change which it made in the lives of the most profligate, as having something in it supernatural, miraculous, and more than human. Origen represents this power in the Christian Religion, as no less wonderful than that of curing the lame and blind, or cleansing the leper. Many others represent it in the same light, and looked upon it as an argument that there was a certain divinity in that Religion, which showed itself in such strange and glorious effects.

4. This therefore was a great means not *only of recommending Christianity to honest and learned Heathens, but of confirming them*

THE EVIDENCES OF

of our Saviour's history, when multitudes of virtuous men daily emselves upon his example, ani his precepts, and actuated by that ch he had promised to send among es.

I find no argument made a stronger n on the minds of these eminent onverts, for strengthening their faith history of our Saviour, than the pre- relating to him in those old prophetic which were deposited among the the greatest enemies to Christianity, ed by them to have been extant many ore his appearance. The learned he- verets were astonished to see the whole of their Saviour's life published be- was born, and to find that the Evan- id Prophets, in their accounts of the , differed only in point of time, the telling what should happen to him other describing those very particular had actually happened. This or himself was pleased to make use rongest argument of his being the pr lessiah, and without it would hard onciled his disciples to the ignomi leath, as in that remarkable pass entions his conversation with the on the day of his resurrection.
v. 13. to the end.

6. The Heathen converts, after having travelled through all human learning, and fortified their minds with the knowledge of arts and sciences, were particularly qualified to examine these prophecies with great care and impartiality, and without prejudice or prepossession. If the Jews, on the one side, put an unnatural interpretation on these prophecies, to evade the force of them in their controversies with the Christians; or if the Christians, on the other side, overstrained several passages in their applications of them as it often happens among men of the best understanding, when their minds are heated with any consideration that bears a more than ordinary weight with it; the learned Heathens may be looked upon as neutrals in the matter when all these prophecies were new to them and their education had left the interpretation of them free and indifferent. Besides, these learned men among the primitive Christians knew how the Jews, who had preceded our Saviour, interpreted these predictions, and the several marks by which they acknowledged the Messiah would be discovered, and how those of the Jewish doctors who succeeded him had deviated from the interpretations and doctrines of their forefathers, on purpose to stifle their own conviction.

7. *This set of arguments had therefore invincible force with those Pagan philosophy*

in the belief of our Saviour's history, they saw multitudes of virtuous persons forming themselves upon his example, excited by his precepts, and actuated by the spirit which he had promised to his disciples.

5. But I find no argument made to impress any impression on the minds of these Pagan converts, for strengthening their belief in the history of our Saviour, than the predictions relating to him in those writings, which were deposited in the hands of the greatest enemies of the gospel, and owned by them to have been written ages before his appearance. These converts were astonished at the history of their Saviour's life, before he was born, and to find the Evangelists and Prophets, in their descriptions of the Messiah, differed only in one foretelling what would be, and the other describing what had actually been. The Saviour himself was described as the strongest and most promised Messiah, have recommended the name of Jesus Christ to the world.

DISCOURSES.

CTION I.

ND HIS ATTRIBUTES.

as, variisque mundum temperat

, generatur ipso,
nam simile aut secundum. Hor.

eing asked by Dionysius, the ty-
god was, desired a day's time to
it, before he made his reply.

day was expired, he desired two
d afterwards, instead of returning

r, demanded still double the time to
of it. This great poet and philo-

the more he contemplated the nature
Deity, found that he waded but the
ut of his depth ; and that he lost him-
the thought, instead of finding an end

we consider the idea which wise men,
light of reason, have framed of the
Being, it amounts to this,
him all the perfection of

greatest confusion in the unbelievers
and the greatest conviction in
those every where speak with ast
these truths they met with in the
mine of learning which was open
and carry the point so far as to
ever excellent doctrine they had
among Pagan writers, had been
their conversation with the Jews
perusal of these writings which
were in their custody.

ADDITIONAL DISCOURSES.

SECTION I. OF GOD, AND HIS ATTRIBUTES.

Qui mare et terras, variisque mundum temperat
horis :
Unde nil majus generatur ipso,
Nec viget quicquam simile aut secundum. Hor.

SIMONIDES being asked by Dionysius, the tyrant, what God was, desired a day's time to consider of it, before he made his reply. When the day was expired, he desired two days ; and afterwards, instead of returning his answer, demanded still double the time to consider of it. This great poet and philosopher, the more he contemplated the nature of the Deity, found that he waded but the more out of his depth ; and that he lost himself in the thought, instead of finding an end of it.

If we consider the idea which wise men, by the light of reason, have framed of the *Divine Being*, it amounts to this: That he *has in him all the perfection of a spiritual*

nature; and since we have no notion of any kind of spiritual perfection but what we discover in our own souls, we join Infinitude to each kind of these perfections, and what is a faculty in an human soul becomes an attribute in God. We exist in place and time ; the Divine Being fills the immensity of space with his presence, and inhabits eternity. We are possessed of a little power, and a little knowledge ; the Divine Being is Almighty and Omniscient. In short, by adding Infinity to any kind of perfection we enjoy, and by joining all these different kinds of perfections in one Being, we form our idea of the great Sovereign of nature.

Though every one who thinks must have made this observation, I shall produce Mr. Locke's authority to the same purpose, out of his Essay on Human Understanding. ' If we examine the idea we have of the incomprehensible Supreme Being, we shall find, that we come by it the same way ; and that the complex ideas we have both of God and separate spirits, are made up of the simple ideas we receive from reflection : v. g. having, from what we experiment in ourselves, got the ideas of existence and duration, of knowledge and power, of pleasure and happiness, and of several other qualities and powers, *which it is better to have, than to be without ; when we would frame an idea the most satis-*

able we can to the Supreme Being, we enlarge every one of these with our idea of Infinity ; and so putting them together, make our complex idea of God.'

It is not impossible that there may be many kinds of spiritual perfection, besides those which are lodged in an human soul ; but it is impossible that we should have ideas of any kinds of perfection, except those of which we have some small rays and short imperfect strokes in ourselves. It would be therefore a very high presumption to determine whether the Supreme Being has not many more attributes than those which enter into our conceptions of him. This is certain, that if there be any kind of spiritual perfection, which is not marked out in an human soul, it belongs in its fulness to the Divine Nature.

Several eminent philosophers have imagined that the soul, in her separate state, may have new faculties springing up in her, which she is not capable of exerting during her present union with the body ; and whether these faculties may not correspond with other attributes in the Divine Nature, and open to us hereafter new matter of wonder and adoration, we are altogether ignorant. This, as I have said before, we ought to acquiesce in, that the Sovereign Being, the great Author of nature, *has in him all possible perfection, as well in kind as in degree* ; to speak according to our

methods of conceiving. I shall only add under this head, that when we have raised our notion of this infinite Being as high as it is possible for the mind of man to go, it will fall infinitely short of what he really is. ‘There is no end of his greatness:’ the most exalted creature he has made is only capable of adoring it; none but himself can comprehend it.

The advice of the son of Sirach is very just and sublime in this light. ‘By his word all things consist. We may speak much, and yet come short: wherefore, in sum, he is all. How shall we be able to magnify him? For he is great above all his works. The Lord is terrible and very great; and marvellous is his power. When you glorify the Lord, exalt him as much as you can; for even yet will he far exceed. And when you exalt him, put forth all your strength, and be not weary; for you can never go far enough. Who hath seen him, that he might tell us? And who can magnify him as he is? There are yet hid greater things than these be, for we have seen but a few of his works.’

I have here only considered the Supreme Being by the light of reason and philosophy. If we would see him in all the wonders of his mercy, we must have recourse to revelation, which represents him to us, not only as infinitely great and glorious, but as infinitely good and

just in his dispensations towards man. But as this is a theory which falls under every one's consideration, though indeed it can never be sufficiently considered, I shall here only take notice of that habitual worship and veneration, which we ought to pay to this Almighty Being. We should often refresh our minds with the thought of him, and annihilate ourselves before him in the contemplation of our own worthlessness, and of his transcendent excellency and perfection. This would imprint in our minds such a constant and uninterrupted awe and veneration as that which I am here recommending, and which is in reality a kind of incessant prayer, and reasonable humiliation of the soul before him who made it.

This would effectually kill in us all the little seeds of pride, vanity, and self-conceit, which are apt to shoot up in the minds of such whose thoughts turn more on those comparative advantages which they enjoy over some of their fellow creatures, than on that infinite distance which is placed between them and the supreme model of all perfection. It would likewise quicken our desires and endeavours of uniting ourselves to him, by all the acts of religion and virtue.

Such an habitual homage to the Supreme Being, would, in a particular manner, banish

from among us that prevailing impiety of using his name on the most trivial occasions.

I find the following passage in an excellent sermon preached at the funeral of a gentleman, who was an honour to his country, and a more diligent as well as successful inquirer into the works of nature, than any other our nation has ever produced. ‘ He had the profoundest veneration for the great God of heaven and earth that I have ever observed in any person. The very name of God was never mentioned by him without a pause and a visible stop in his discourse; in which, one that knew him most particularly above twenty years, has told me, that he was so exact, that he does not remember to have observed him once to fail in it.’

Every one knows the veneration which was paid by the Jews to a name so great, wonderful, and holy. They would not let it enter even into their religious discourses. What can we then think of those who make use of so tremendous a name in the ordinary expressions of their anger, mirth, and most impudent passions? of those who admit it into the most familiar questions and assertions, ludicrous phrases, and works of humour? not to mention those who violate it by solemn perjuries? It would be an affront to reason to endeavour to set forth the horror and pro-

faneness of such a practice. The very mention of it exposes it sufficiently to those in whom the light of nature, not to say religion, is not utterly extinguished. O.

— Deum namque ire per oinnes
Terrasque, tractusque maris, cœlumque profundum.
Vinc.

I WAS yesterday about sun-set walking in the open fields, till the night insensibly fell upon me. I at first amused myself with all the richness and variety of colours which appeared in the western parts of heaven: in proportion as they faded away and went out, several stars and planets appeared, one after another, till the whole firmament was in a glow. The blueness of the ether was exceedingly heightened and enlivened by the season of the year, and by the rays of all those luminaries that passed through it. The galaxy appeared in its most beautiful white. To complete the scene, the full moon rose at length in that clouded majesty, which Milton takes notice of, and opened to the eye a new picture of nature, which was more finely shaded, and disposed among softer lights, than that which the sun had before discovered to us.

As I was surveying the moon walking in her brightness, and taking her progress among the constellations, a thought rose in me, which,

I believe, very often perplexes and disturb men of serious and contemplative natures David himself fell into it in that reflection ' When I consider the heavens, the work o thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained ; what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, tha thou regardest him ? ' In the same manner when I considered that infinite host of stars or, to speak more philosophically, of suns which were then shining upon me, with those innumerable sets of planets or worlds, which were moving round their respective suns when I still enlarged the idea, and suppose another heaven of suns and worlds rising still above this which we discovered, and these still enlightened by a superior firmament of luminaries, which are planted at so great a distance, that they may appear to the inhabitants of the former as the stars do to us ; in short whilst I pursued this thought, I could not but reflect on that little insignificant figure which myself bore amidst the immensity of God's works.

Were the sun, which enlightens this part of the creation, with all the host of planetary worlds that move about him, utterly extinguished and annihilated, they would not miss more than a grain of sand upon the sea-shore. The space they possess is so exceedingly little, in comparison of the whole

that it would scarce make a blank in the creation. The chasm would be imperceptible to an eye that could take in the whole compass of nature, and pass from one end of the creation to the other; as it is possible there may be such a sense in ourselves hereafter, or in creatures which are at present more exalted than ourselves. We see many stars by the help of glasses, which we do not discover with our naked eyes; and the finer our telescopes are, the more still are our discoveries. Huygenius carries this thought so far, that he does not think it impossible there may be stars, whose light is not yet travelled down to us, since their first creation. There is no question but the universe has certain bounds set to it; but when we consider that it is the work of infinite power, prompted by infinite goodness, with an infinite space to exert itself in, how can our imagination set any bounds to it?

To return therefore to my first thought, I could not but look upon myself with secret horror, as a being that was not worth the smallest regard of one who had so great a work under his care and superintendency. I was afraid of being overlooked amidst the immense variety of creatures, which in all probability swarm through all these immeasurable regions of matter.

In order to recover myself from this mortifying thought, I considered that it took its rise from those narrow conceptions which we are apt to entertain of the Divine Nature. We ourselves cannot attend to many different objects at the same time. If we are careful to inspect some things, we must of course neglect others. This imperfection, which we observe in ourselves, is an imperfection that cleaves in some degree to creatures of the highest capacities, as they are creatures, that is, beings of finite and limited natures. The presence of every created being is confined to a certain measure of space, and consequently his observation is stinted to a certain number of objects. The sphere, in which we move, and act, and understand, is of a wider circumference to one creature than another, according as we rise one above another in the scale of existence. But the widest of these our spheres has its circumference. When therefore we reflect on the Divine Nature, we are so used and accustomed to this imperfection in ourselves, that we cannot forbear in some measure ascribing it to him, in whom there is no shadow of imperfection. Our reason indeed assures us, that his attributes are infinite; but the poorness of our conceptions is such, that it cannot forbear setting bounds to every thing *it contemplates*, till our reason comes again to

our succour, and throws down all those little prejudices which rise in us unawares, and are natural to the mind of man.

We shall therefore utterly extinguish this melancholy thought, of our being overlooked by our Maker in the multiplicity of his works, and the infinity of those objects, among which he seems to be incessantly employed, if we consider, in the first place, that he is Omnipresent; and, in the second, that he is Omniscient.

If we consider him in his Omnipresence; his Being passes through, actuates, and supports the whole frame of nature. His creation, and every part of it, is full of him. There is nothing he has made, that is either so distant, so little, or so inconsiderable, which he does not essentially inhabit. His substance is within the substance of every being, whether material or immaterial, and as intimately present to it, as that being is to itself. It would be an imperfection in him, were he able to remove out of one place into another, or to withdraw himself from any thing he has created, or from any part of that space which is diffused and spread abroad to infinity. In short, to speak of him in the language of the old philosopher, he is a Being, whose centre is every where, and his circumference no where.

In the second place, he is Omniscient as well as Omnipresent. His Omnicience in-

deed necessarily and naturally flows from his Omnipresence; he cannot but be conscious of every motion that arises in the whole material world, which he thus essentially pervades, and of every thought that is stirring in the intellectual world, to every part of which he is thus intimately united. Several moralists have considered the creation as the temple of God, which he has built with his own hands, and which is filled with his presence. Others have considered infinite space as the receptacle, or rather the habitation, of the Almighty: but the noblest and most exalted way of considering this infinite space, is that of Sir Isaac Newton, who calls it the *sensorium* of the Godhead. Brutes and men have their *sensoriola*, or little *sensoriums*, by which they apprehend the presence and perceive the actions of a few objects, that lie contiguous to them. Their knowledge and observation turns within a very narrow circle. But as God Almighty cannot but perceive and know every thing in which he resides, infinite space gives room to infinite knowledge, and is, as it were, an organ to Omnipotence.

Were the soul separate from the body, and with one glance of thought should start beyond the bounds of the creation, should it for millions of years continue its progress through infinite space with the same activity, it would still find itself within the embrace of its Crea-

tor, and encompassed round with the immensity of the Godhead. Whilst we are in the body, he is not less present with us, because he is concealed from us. ‘O that I knew where I might find him !’ says Job. ‘Behold I go forward, but he is not there ; and backward, but I cannot perceive him : on the left hand, where he does work, but I cannot behold him : he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.’ In short, reason as well as revelation assures us, that he cannot be absent from us, notwithstanding he is undiscovered by us.

In this consideration of God Almighty’s Omnipresence and Omniscience every uncomfortable thought vanishes. He cannot but regard every thing that has being, especially such of his creatures who fear they are not regarded by him. He is privy to all their thoughts, and to that anxiety of heart in particular, which is apt to trouble them on this occasion : for, as it is impossible he should overlook any of his creatures, so we may be confident that he regards with an eye of mercy, those who endeavour to recommend themselves to his notice, and in an unfeigned humility of heart think themselves unworthy that he should be mindful of them.

— Cœlum quid quærimus ultra? Luc.

In your paper of Friday the 9th instant, you had occasion to consider the Ubiquity of the Godhead, and at the same time to show, that, as he is present to every thing, he cannot but be attentive to every thing, and privy to all the modes and parts of its existence; or, in other words, that his Omniscience and Omnipresence are co-existent, and run together through the whole infinitude of space. This consideration might furnish us with many incentives to devotion and motives to morality; but as this subject has been handled by several excellent writers, I shall consider it in a light wherein I have not seen it placed by others.

First, How disconsolate is the condition of an intellectual being, who is thus present with his Maker, but at the same time receives no extraordinary benefit or advantage from this his presence!

Secondly, How deplorable is the condition of an intellectual being, who feels no other effects from this his presence, but such as proceed from divine wrath and indignation!

Thirdly, How happy is the condition of that intellectual being, who is sensible of his Maker's presence, from the secret effects of *his mercy and lovingkindness*!

First, How disconsolate is the condition

an intellectual being, who is thus present with his Maker, but at the same time receives no extraordinary benefit or advantage from this his presence! Every particle of matter is actuated by this Almighty Being which passes through it.. The heavens and the earth, the stars and planets move and gravitate by virtue of this great principle within them. All the dead parts of nature are invigorated by the presence of their Creator, and made capable of exerting their respective qualities. The several instincts, in the brute creation, do likewise operate and work towards the several ends which are agreeable to them, by this divine energy. Man only, who does not co-operate with this holy Spirit, and is unattentive to his presence, receives none of those advantages from it, which are perfective of his nature, and necessary to his well-being. The Divinity is with him, and in him, and every where about him, but of no advantage to him. It is the same thing to a man without religion, as if there were no God in the world. It is indeed impossible for an infinite Being to remove himself from any of his creatures; but though he cannot withdraw his essence from us, which would argue an imperfection in him, he can withdraw from us all the joys and consolations of it. His presence *may perhaps be necessary to support us in our existence; but he may leave this ou*

existence to itself, with regard to its happiness or misery. For, in this sense, he may cast us away from his presence, and take his holy Spirit from us. This single consideration one would think sufficient to make us open our hearts to all those infusions of joy and gladness, which are so near at hand, and ready to be poured in upon us; especially when we consider, secondly, the deplorable condition of an intellectual being, who feels no other effects from his Maker's presence but such as proceed from divine wrath and indignation!

We may assure ourselves that the great Author of nature, will not always be as one who is indifferent to any of his creatures. Those who will not feel him in his love, will be sure at length to feel him in his displeasure. And how dreadful is the condition of the creature, who is only sensible of the being of his Creator by what he suffers from him! He is as essentially present in hell as in heaven, but the inhabitants of those accursed places behold him only in his wrath, and shrink within the flames, to conceal themselves from him. It is not in the power of imagination to conceive the fearful effects of Omnipotence incensed.

But I shall only consider the wretchedness of an intellectual Being, who, in this life, lies under the displeasure of him, that at all times

and in all places is intimately united with him. He is able to disquiet the soul, and vex it in all its faculties. He can hinder any of the greatest comforts of life from refreshing us, and give an edge to every one of its slightest calamities. Who then can bear the thought of being an outcast from his presence, that is, from the comforts of it, or of feeling it only in its terrors? How pathetic is that expostulation of Job, when, for the trial of his patience, he was made to look upon himself in this deplorable condition! ‘Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am become a burden to myself?’ But, thirdly, how happy is the condition of that intellectual being, who is sensible of his Maker’s presence, from the secret effects of his mercy and loving-kindness!

The blessed in heaven behold him face to face; that is, are as sensible of his presence as we are of the presence of any person, whom we look upon with our eyes. There is, doubtless, a faculty in spirits, by which they apprehend one another, as our senses do material objects: and there is no question but our souls, when they are disembodied or placed in glorified bodies, will by this faculty, in whatever part of space they reside, be always sensible of the divine presence. We, who have this veil of flesh standing between us and the world of spirits, must be content to

know that the Spirit of God is present with us, by the effects which he produceth in us. Our outward senses are too gross to apprehend him ; we may, however, taste and see how gracious he is, by his influence upon our minds, by those virtuous thoughts which he awakens in us, by those secret comforts and refreshments which he conveys into our souls, and by those ravishing joys and inward satisfactions, which are perpetually springing up and diffusing themselves among all the thoughts of good men. He is lodged in our very essence, and is as a soul within a soul, to irradiate its understanding, rectify its will, purify its passions, and enliven all the powers of man. How happy therefore is an intellectual being, who, by prayer and meditation, by virtue and good works, opens this communication between God and his own soul ! Though the whole creation frowns upon him, and all nature looks black about him, he has his light and support within him, that are able to cheer his mind, and bear him up in the midst of all those horrors which encompass him. He knows that his helper is at hand, and is always nearer to him than any thing else can be, which is capable of annoying or terrifying him. In the midst of calumny or contempt, he attends to that Being *who whispers better things within his soul, and whom he looks upon as his defender, his*

and the lifter up of his head. In his solitude and retirement, he knows he is in company with the greatest of ; and perceives within himself such sensations of his presence, as are more awful than any thing that can be met in the conversation of his creatures. in the hour of death, he considers the of his dissolution to be nothing else but reaking down of that partition, which betwixt his soul and the sight of that , who is always present with him, and is to manifest himself to him in fulness of .

we would be thus happy, and thus le of our Maker's presence, from the effects of his mercy and goodness, just keep such a watch over all our hts, that, in the language of the Scrip- his soul may have pleasure in us. We take care not to grieve his holy Spi- und endeavour to make the medita- of our hearts always acceptable in his that he may delight thus to reside lwell in us. The light of nature could : Seneca to this doctrine, in a very re- able passage among his Epistles, ' Sacer in nobis spiritus bonorum malorumque i, et observator, et quemadmodum nos tractamus, ita et ille nos.' There is a Spirit residing in us, who watches and

observes both good and evil men, and will treat us after the same manner that we treat him. But I shall conclude this discourse with those more emphatical words in divine Revelation, ‘If a man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.’

— Si verbo audacia detur,
Non metuam magni dixisse palatia cœli.

OVID MET.

‘SIR,

‘I CONSIDERED in my two last letters that awful and tremendous subject, the Ubiquity or Omnipresence of the Divine Being. I have shown that he is equally present in all places throughout the whole extent of infinite space. This doctrine is so agreeable to reason, that we meet with it in the writings of the enlightened heathens, as I might show at large, were it not already done by other hands. But though the Deity be thus essentially present through all the immensity of space, there is one part of it, in which he discovers himself in a most transcendent and visible glory. This is that place which is marked out in Scripture, under the differer appellations of “paradise, the third heaven, the throne of God, and the habitation of glory.” It is here where the glorię

f our Saviour resides, and where all the celestial hierarchies, and the innumerable hosts of angels, are represented as perpetually surrounding the seat of God with hallelujahs and hymns of praise. This is that presence of God, which some of the divines call his glorious and others his majestic presence. He is indeed as essentially present in all other places as in this ; but it is here where he resides in a sensible magnificence, and in the midst of those splendours which can affect the imagination of created beings.

' It is very remarkable that this opinion of God Almighty's presence in heaven, whether discovered by the light of nature, or by a general tradition from our first parents, prevails among all the nations of the world, whatsoever different notions they entertain of the Godhead. If you look into Homer, that is, the most ancient of the Greek writers, you see the Supreme Powers seated in the heavens, and encompassed with inferior Deities, among whom the Muses are represented as singing incessantly about his throne. Who does not here see the main strokes and outlines of this great truth we are speaking of? The same doctrine is shadowed out in many other Heathen authors, though at the same time, like several other revealed truths, dashed and adulterated with a mixture of fables and human inventions. But to pass over the notions of

Sanctum Sanctorum, in wh
appeared among the figures
and into which none but t
self was permitted to enter
an atonement for the sins
if we consider the whole c
temple, there is in it this I
which the high-priest of ou
and took his place among
angels, after having made
the sins of mankind.

‘With how much skill :
God be erected ! With wh
is that habitation beautifi
trived and built by him ‘w

affect him by that Being who knows the inward frame of a soul, and how to please and ravish it in all its most secret powers and faculties. It is to this majestic presence of God we may apply those beautiful expressions in Holy Writ: "Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not ; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight." The light of the sun, and all the glories of the world in which we live, are but as weak and sickly glimmerings, or rather darkness itself, in comparison of those splendours which encompass the throne of God.

' As the glory of this place is transcendent beyond imagination, so probably is the extent of it. There is light behind light, and glory within glory. How far that space may reach, in which God thus appears in perfect majesty, we cannot possibly conceive. Though it is not infinite, it may be indefinite ; and though not immeasurable in itself, it may be so with regard to any created eye or imagination. If he has made these lower regions of matter so unconceivably wide and magnificent for the habitation of mortal and perishable beings, how great may we suppose the courts of his house to be, where he makes his residence in a more especial manner, and displays himself in the fulness of his glory, among an innumerable company of angels, and spirits of *just men made perfect* !

' This is certain, that our imaginations can-

OF GOD, AND
it be raised too high, when we think of a
place where Omnipotence and Omniscience
have so signally exerted themselves, because
they are able to produce a scene infinitely
more great and glorious than what we are
able to imagine. It is not impossible but,
at the consummation of all things, these out-
ward apartments of nature, which are now
suited to those beings who inhabit them, may
be taken in and added to that glorious place
of which I am here speaking, and by that
means made a proper habitation for beings
who are exempt from mortality, and cleared
of their imperfections: for so the Scripture
seems to intimate, when it speaks of new
heavens and of a new earth, wherein dwelleth
righteousness.

'I have only considered this glorious place,
with regard to the sight and imagination,
though it is highly probable that our other
senses may here likewise enjoy their highest
gratifications. There is nothing which more
ravishes and transports the soul, than har-
mony; and we have great reason to believe
from the descriptions of this place in hol-
y Scripture, that this is one of the enterai-
ments of it. And if the soul of man can be
wonderfully affected with those strains of m-
uch more will it be raised and elevate
those in which is exerted the whole

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armony ! The senses are faculties of the man soul, though they cannot be employed, bring this our vital union, without proper instruments in the body. Why therefore should we exclude the satisfaction of these faculties, which we find by experience are inlets of great pleasure to the soul, from among those entertainments which are to make up our happiness hereafter? Why should we suppose that our hearing and seeing will not be gratified with those objects which are most agreeable to them, and which they cannot meet with in these lower regions of nature ; objects, " which neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive ? I knew a man in Christ (says St. Paul, speaking of himself) above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell : God knoweth) such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell : God knoweth) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not possible for a man to utter." By this is meant, that what he had heard was so infinitely different from any thing which he had heard in this world, that it was impossible to express it in such words as might convey a notion of it to his hearers.

' It is very natural for us to take delight in inquiries concerning any foreign country, where we are some time or other to make our abode ; and as we all hope to be admitted into this glorious place, it is both a laudable and useful curiosity, to get what informations we can of it, whilst we make use of Revelation for our guide. When these everlasting doors shall be open to us, we may be sure that the pleasures and beauties of this place will infinitely transcend our present hopes and expectations, and that the glorious appearance of the throne of God will rise infinitely beyond whatever we are able to conceive of it. We might here entertain ourselves with many other speculations on this subject, from those several hints which we find of it in the holy Scriptures; as, whether there may not be different mansions, and apartments of glory, to beings of different natures; whether, as they excel one another in perfection, they are not admitted nearer to the throne of the Almighty, and enjoy greater manifestations of his presence; whether there are not solemn times and occasions, when all the multitud of heaven celebrate the presence of the Maker in more extraordinary forms of praise and adoration; as Adam, though he had continued in a state of innocence, would, in *opinion of our divines*, have kept holy Sabbath-day in a more particular man-

her of the seven. These, and the
ations, we may very innocently
long as we make use of them to
with a desire of becoming inhabi-
s delightful place.

In this, and in two foregoing letters,
the most serious subject that can
be mind of a man, the Omnipre-
e Deity ; a subject, which, if pos-
ld never depart from our medita-
have considered the Divine Being,
bits infinitude, as he dwells among
is he is present to the mind of man,
iscovers himself in a more glorious
ong the regions of the blest. Such
tion should be kept awake in us at
and in all places, and possess our
. a perpetual awe and reverence ;
e interwoven with all our thoughts
tions, and become one with the
ss of our own being. It is not to
. on in the coldness of philosophy,
to sink us into the lowest prostra-
him, who is so astonishingly great,
and holy.'

vantur.

We consider infinite space without a circumference, or infinite duration without a beginning nor end; and in the case of infinite space, we consider a particular place in which we centre to the whole expansions of eternity, we consider it present to us as the middle point of the whole line into two equal parts; for this reason many witty authors have sent time to an isthmus, a narrow land, that rises in the middle of the ocean.

conveyed to us by those words, an eternity that is past, and an eternity that is to come. Each of these eternities is bounded at the one extreme ; or, in other words, the former has an end, and the latter a beginning.

Let us first of all consider that eternity which is past, reserving that which is to come for the subject of another paper. The nature of this eternity is utterly inconceivable by the mind of man : our reason demonstrates to us that it has been, but at the same time can frame no idea of it, but what is big with absurdity and contradiction. We can have no other conception of any duration which is past, than that all of it was once present ; and whatever was once present, is at some certain distance from us ; and whatever is at any certain distance from us, be the distance never so remote, cannot be eternity. The very notion of any duration's being past, implies that it was once present ; for the idea of being once present is actually included in the idea of its being past. This therefore is a depth not to be sounded by human understanding. We are sure that there has been an eternity, and yet contradict ourselves when we measure this eternity by any notion which we can frame of it.

If we go to the bottom of this matter, we shall find, that the difficulties we meet with in our conceptions of eternity proceed from

this single reason, that we can have no other idea of any kind of duration, than that by which we ourselves, and all other created beings, do exist; which is, a successive duration made up of past, present, and to come. There is nothing which exists after this manner, all the parts of whose existence were not once actually present, and consequently may be reached by a certain number of years applied to it. We may ascend as high as we please, and employ our being to that eternity which is to come, in adding millions of years to millions of years, and we can never come up to any fountain-head of duration, to an beginning in eternity: but at the same time we are sure, that whatever was once present does lie within the reach of numbers, though perhaps we can never be able to put enough of them together for that purpose. We may as well say, that any thing may be actually present in any part of infinite space, which does not lie at a certain distance from us, as that any part of infinite duration was once actually present, and does not also lie at some determined distance from us. The distance in both cases may be immeasurable and indefinite as to our faculties; but our reason tells us that it cannot be so in itself. Here therefore is that difficulty which human understanding is not capable of surmounting. *We are sure that something must have existed*

from eternity, and are at the same time unable to conceive, that any thing which exists, according to our notion of existence, can have existed from eternity.

It is hard for a reader, who has not revolved this thought in his own mind, to follow in such an abstracted speculation; but I have been the longer on it, because I think it is a demonstrative argument of the being and eternity of a God: and though there are many other demonstrations which lead us to this great truth, I do not think we ought to lay aside any proofs in this matter, which the light of reason has suggested to us, especially when it is such a one as has been urged by men famous for their penetration and force of understanding, and which appears altogether conclusive to those who will be at the pains to examine it.

Having thus considered that eternity which is past, according to the best idea we can frame of it, I shall now draw up those several articles on this subject, which are dictated to us by the light of reason, and which may be looked upon as the creed of a philosopher in this great point.

First, It is certain that no Being could have made itself; for if so, it must have acted before it was, which is a contradiction.

Secondly, That therefore some Being must have existed from all eternity.

distance in his perfections created Beings, exists in another from them, and in a they can have no idea.

I know that several of those would not be thought ignorant have pretended to explain God's existence, by telling us that eternity is with him a fixed point; or, which is *infinite instant*; that nothing relating to his existence is either past or future; which the ingenious Mr. C. has given in his description of heaven;

disquisitions, when we meditate on who is environed with so much glory & perfection, who is the source of being, & contain of all that existence which we & the whole creation derive from him. Let us therefore with the utmost humility acknowledge that as some Being must necessarily have existed from eternity, so this being does after an incomprehensible manner, since impossible for a Being to have existed before eternity after our manner or notions of time. Revelation confirms these natural & of reason in the accounts which it gives of the divine existence, where it tells us that he is the same yesterday, to-day, and ever; that he is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending; that a thousand years are with him as one day, and one day a thousand years; by which and the expressions we are taught, that his existence with relation to time or duration, is very different from the existence of any creatures, and consequently that it is impossible for us to frame any adequate conception of it.

In the first revelation which he makes of himself, he entitles himself 'I am that I am' and when Moses desires to know what he shall give him in his embassy to Pharaoh, he bids him say that 'I am' hath sent me. Our great Creator, by this re-

lation of himself, does in a manner ex
every thing else from a real existence
distinguishes himself from his creature
the only Being which truly and really
The ancient Platonic notion, which was c
from speculations of eternity, wond
agrees with this revelation which God
made of himself. There is nothing, say
which in reality exists, whose existence,
call it, is pieced up of past, present, a
come. Such a flitting and successive Exist
is rather a shadow of Existence, and some
which is like it, than Existence itself.
only properly exists, whose existence i
tirely present; that is, in other words,
exists in the most perfect manner, and in
a manner as we have no idea of.

I shall conclude this speculation wit
useful inference. How can we suffici
prostrate ourselves and fall down befor
Maker, when we consider that ineffable
ness and wisdom which contrived this Exist
for finite natures? What must be the
flowings of that good-will, which prou
our Creator to adapt Existence to Beir
whom it is not necessary? Especially
we consider that he himself was before
complete possession of existence and of
piness, and in the full enjoyinent of ete
*What man can think of himself as calle
and separated from nothing, of his being*

conscious, a reasonable, and a happy creature, in short, of being taken in as a sharer of his Existence, and a kind of partner in Eternity, without being swallowed up in wonder, in praise, in adoration! It is indeed a thought too big for the mind of man, and rather to be entertained in the secrecy of devotion, and in the silence of the soul, than to be expressed by words. The Supreme Being has not given us powers or faculties sufficient to extol and magnify such unutterable goodness.

It is however some comfort to us, that we shall be always doing what we shall be never able to do, and that a work which cannot be finished, will however be the work of an eternity.

SECTION II.

THE POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD IN THE CREATION.

*Inde hominum pecundumque genus, vitesque volantum,
Et quæ marmoreo fert monstra sub æquore pontus.*
Vinc.

THOUGH there is a great deal of pleasure in contemplating the material world, by which I mean that system of bodies into which Na-

ture has so curiously wrought the mass of dead matter, with the several relations which those bodies bear to one another; there is still, methinks, something more wonderful and surprising in contemplations on the world of life, by which I mean all those animals with which every part of the universe is furnished. The material world is only the shell of the universe: the world of life are its inhabitants.

If we consider those parts of the material world which lie the nearest to us, and are therefore subject to our observations and enquiries, it is amazing to consider the infinity of animals with which it is stocked. Every part of matter is peopled; every green leaf swarms with inhabitants. There is scarce a single humour in the body of a man, or of any other animal, in which our glasses do not discover myriads of living creatures. The surface of animals is also covered with other animals, which are in the same manner the basis of other animals, that live upon it; nay we find in the most solid bodies, as in marble itself, innumerable cells and cavities, that are crowded with such imperceptible inhabitants as are too little for the naked eye to discover. On the other hand, if we look into the more bulky parts of nature, we see the seas, lakes and rivers teeming with numberless kinds of living creatures: we find every mountain and marsh, wilderness and wood, plenty

stocked with birds and beasts, and every part of matter affording proper necessaries and conveniences for the livelihood of multitudes which inhabit it.

The author of the Plurality of Worlds draws a very good argument from this consideration, for the peopling of every planet; as indeed it seems very probable from the analogy of reason, that if no part of matter, which we are acquainted with, lies waste and useless, those great bodies, which are at such a distance from us, should not be desert and unpeopled, but rather that they should be furnished with beings adapted to their respective situations.

Existence is a blessing to those beings only which are endowed with perception, and is in a manner thrown away upon dead matter, any further than as it is subservient to beings which are conscious of their existence. Accordingly we find, from the bodies which lie under our observation, that matter is only made as the basis and support of animals, and that there is no more of the one, than what is necessary for the existence of the other.

Infinite Goodness is of so communicative a nature, that it seems to delight in the conferring of existence upon every degree of perceptive being. As this is a speculation, which I have often pursued with great pleasure to myself, I shall enlarge further upon it, by considering that part of the scale of beings which comes within our knowledge.

There are some living creatures, which are raised but just above dead matter. To mention only that species of shell-fish, which are formed in the fashion of a cone, that grow to the surface of several rocks, and immediately die upon their being severed from the place where they grow. There are many other creatures but one remove from these, which have no other sense besides that of feeling and taste. Others have still an additional one of hearing; others of smell, and others of sight. It is wonderful to observe, by what a gradual progress the world of life advances through a prodigious variety of species before a creature is formed that is complete in all its senses; and even among these there is such a different degree of perfection in the sense which one animal enjoys beyond what appears in another, that though the sense in different animals be distinguished by the same common denomination, it seems almost of a different nature. If after this we look into the several inward perfections of cunning and sagacity, or what we generally call instinct, we find them rising after the same manner, imperceptibly one above another, and receiving additional improvements, according to the species in which they are implanted. This progress in nature is so very gradual, that the most perfect of a *inferior species* comes very near to the *imperfect* of that which is immediately above

OF GOD IN THE CREATION.

The exuberant and overflowing goodness of the Supreme Being, whose mercy extends to all his works, is plainly seen, as I have hinted, from his having made so vast a matter, at least what falls within our knowledge, that does not swarm with life. His goodness less seen in the diversity of the multitude of living creatures. If he had only made one species of animals, the rest would have enjoyed the happy existence; he has, therefore, specifically created every degree of life, every degree of being. The whole chasm in nature, from a plant to a man, is filled up with diversities of creatures, rising one over another, in a gentle and easy ascent, that the distinctions and deviations from one species to another are almost insensible. This intermediate space is so well husbanded and managed, that there is scarce a degree of perception which does not appear in some one part of the scale of life. Is the goodness or wisdom of the Divine Being more manifested in this proceeding?

There is a consequence, besides those already mentioned, which seems very naturally deducible from the foregoing considerations. If the scale of being rises by regular progress so high as man, we have a parity of reason suppose that it ascends gradually through those beings

are of a superior nature to him ; since there is an infinitely greater space and room for different degrees of perfection, between the Supreme Being and man, than between man and the most despicable insect. This consequence of so great a variety of beings which are superior to us, from that variety which is inferior to us, is made by Mr. Locke, in a passage which I shall here set down, after having premised, that notwithstanding there is such infinite room between man and his Maker for the creative power to exert itself in, it is impossible that it should ever be filled up, since there will be still an infinite gap or distance between the highest created being, and the power which produced him.

' That there should be more species of intelligent creatures above us, than there are of sensible and material below us, is probable to me from hence ; that in all the visible corporeal world we see no chasms, or no gaps. All quite down from us, the descent is by easy steps, and a continued series of things, that in each remove differ very little one from the other. There are fishes that have wings, and are not strangers to the airy region : and there are some birds, that are inhabitants of the water, whose blood is cold as fishes, and their flesh so like in taste, that the scrupulous *allowed them* on fish-days. There are *amals* so near of kin both to birds and bea-

OF GOD IN THE CREATI

that they are in the middle b
amphibious animals link the t
aquatic together ; seals live at la
and porpoises have the warm i
trails of a hog ; not to mention
fidently reported of mermaid
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us towards his infinite perfect
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of creatures above us, than the
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we are from the lowest state of being, and that which approaches nearest to nothing. And yet of all those distinct species, we have no clear distinct ideas.'

In this system of being, there is no creature so wonderful in its nature, and which so much deserves our particular attention, as man, who fills up the middle space between the animal and intellectual nature, the visible and invisible world, and is that link in the chain of beings, which has been often termed the *nexus utriusque mundi*. So that he who in one respect is associated with angels and archangels, may look upon a Being of infinite perfection as his father, and the highest order of spirits as his brethren, may in another respect say to 'corruption, thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother, and my sister.

O.

.....*Facies non omnibus una,*
Nec diversa tamen—

OVID.

THOSE who were skilled in anatomy among the ancients, concluded from the outward and inward make of an human body, that it was the work of a Being transcendently wise and powerful. As the world grew more enlightened in this art, their discoveries gave them fresh opportunities of admiring the conduct

of Providence in the formation of an human body. Galen was converted by his dissections, and could not but own a Supreme Being upon a survey of this his handy-work. There were, indeed, many parts, of which the old anatomists did not know the certain use; but as they saw that most of those which they examined were adapted with admirable art to their several functions, they did not question but those, whose uses they could not determine, were contrived with the same wisdom for respective ends and purposes. Since the circulation of the blood has been found out, and many other great discoveries have been made by our modern anatomists, we see new wonders in the human frame, and discern several important uses for those parts, which uses the ancients knew nothing of. In short, the body of man is such a subject as stands the utmost test of examination. Though it appears formed with the nicest wisdom, upon the most superficial survey of it, it still mends upon the search, and produces our surprise and amazement in proportion as we pry into it. What I have here said of an human body may be applied to the body of every animal which has been the subject of anatomical observations.

The body of an animal is an object adequate to our senses. It is a particular system of Providence, that lies in a narrow compass,

The eye is able to command it, and by successive inquiries can search into all its parts. Could the body of the whole earth, or indeed the whole universe, be thus submitted to the examination of our senses, were it not too big and disproportioned for our inquiries, too unwieldly for the management of the eye and hand, there is no question but it would appear to us as curious and well-contrived a frame as that of an human body. We should see the same concatenation and subservency, the same necessity and usefulness, the same beauty and harmony in all and every of its parts, as what we discover in the body of every single animal.

The more extended our reason is, and the more able to grapple with immense objects, the greater still are those discoveries which it makes of wisdom and providence in the work of the creation. A Sir Isaac Newton, who stands up as the miracle of the present age, can look through a whole planetary system; consider it in its weight, number and measure; and draw from it as many demonstrations of infinite power and wisdom, as a more confined understanding is able to deduce from the system of an human body.

But to return to our speculations on anatomy. I shall here consider the fabric and texture of the bodies of animals in one particular view; which, in my opinion, shows

the hand of a thinking and all-wise Being in their formation, with the evidence of a thousand demonstrations. I think we may lay this down as an uncontested principle, that chance never acts in a perpetual uniformity and consistence with itself. If one should always fling the same number with ten thousand dice, or see every throw just five times less, or five times more in number than the throw which immediately preceded it, who would not imagine that there is some invisible power which directs the cast? This is the proceeding which we find in the operations of nature. Every kind of animal is diversified by different magnitudes, each of which gives rise to a different species. Let a man trace the dog or lion kind, and he will observe how many of the works of nature are published, if I may use the expression, in a variety of editions. If we look into the reptile world, or into those different kinds of animals that fill the element of water, we meet with the same repetitions among several species that differ very little from one another, but in size and bulk. You find the same creature that is drawn at large, copied out in several proportions, and ending in miniature. It would be tedious to produce instances of this regular conduct in Providence, as it would be superfluous to those who are versed in the natural history of animals. The magnificent harmony of the universe is such

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But to pursue this tho
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ner. One eye would have
the subsistence and preserva
but, in order to better his
another placed with a mathe
in the

of the body entirely correspond with the other in all those minute strokes, without which a man might have very well subsisted; nay, when we often see a single part repeated an hundred times in the same body, notwithstanding it consists of the most intricate weaving of numberless fibres, and these parts differing still in magnitude, as the convenience of their particular situation requires; sure a man must have a strange cast of understanding, who does not discover the finger of God in so wonderful a work. These duplicates in those parts of the body, without which a man might have very well subsisted, though not so well as with them, are a plain demonstration of an all-wise contriver; as those more numerous copyings, which are found among the vessels of the same body, are evident demonstrations that they could not be the work of chance. This argument receives additional strength, if we apply it to every animal and insect within our knowledge, as well as to those numberless living creatures, that are objects too minute for a human eye; and if we consider how the several species in this whole world of life resemble one another, in very many particulars, so far as is convenient for their respective states of existence: it is much more probable that an hundred million of dice should be casually thrown an hundred million of times in the same number, than

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Christian world. It is entitled, 'A Demonstration of the Existence, Wisdom, and Omnipotence of God,' drawn from the knowledge of nature, particularly of man, and fitted to the meanest capacity, by the Archbishop of Cambray, author of Telemachus, and translated from the French by the same hand that Englished that excellent piece. This great author, in the writings which he has before produced, has manifested an heart full of virtuous sentiments, great benevolence to mankind, as well as a sincere and fervent piety towards his Creator. His talents and parts are a very great good to the world; and it is a pleasing thing to behold the polite arts subservient to religion, and recommending it from its natural beauty. Looking over the letters of my correspondents, I find one which celebrates this treatise, and recommends it to my readers.

TO THE GUARDIAN.

'SIR,

'I THINK I have somewhere read, in the writings of one whom I take to be a friend of yours, a saying which struck me very much, and as I remember it was to this purpose: "The existence of a God is so far from being a thing that wants to be proved, that I think it *the only thing* of which we are certain." *This is a sprightly and just expression:* how-

AND WISDOM

I will not be displeased
and of saying something
of the Bishop of Cam-
talents views all things
in that in which ordi-
d the devout disposition
those talents to the im-
asures of a good life.
ophy in a dress almost
enjoy in full perfection
they are reading him,
The pleasing represen-
wers in the beginning
consideration of the na-
dition of reason, in the
npress upon the mind
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that superiority over
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r himself, that he has
a prayer. This ado-
it befitting his cha-
ns of his heart flow-
ledge. I thought it
aturday's paper, and
ake you a present of
anslator was obliged
to an exact version
have endeavoured to
by taking the liberty
in such a way as

should have uttered them, if they had been my own. It has been observed, that the private letters of great men are the best pictures of their souls: but certainly their private devotions would be still more instructive; and I know not why they should not be as curious and entertaining.

‘ If you insert this prayer, I know not but I may send you, for another occasion, one used by a very great wit of the last age, which has allusions to the errors of a very wild life, and I believe you will think is written with an uncommon spirit. The person whom I mean was an excellent writer; and the publication of this prayer of his may be, perhaps, some kind of antidote against the infection of his other writings. But this supplication of the bishop has in it a more happy and untroubled spirit; it is (if that is not saying something too fond) the worship of an Angel concerned for those who had fallen, but himself still in the state of glory and innocence. The book ends with an act of devotion to this effect.

‘ O my God, if the greater number of mankind do not discover thee in that glorious show of nature which thou hast placed before our eyes, it is not because thou art far from every one of us; thou art present to us more than any one object which we touch with our hands; but our senses, and the passions which

echoes with the repetiti
But such is our insensibi
to the great and unive
Thou art every where
us; but we wander fro
strangers to our own sou
hend thy presence. C
ternal fountain of light
the ancient of days, wi
without end: O thou, w
that truly live, those ca
thee, who seek for the
But, alas, the very gifts,

of giving us pleasure, not considering that thou conveyest through them all the pleasure which we imagine they give us. Such vain empty objects, that are only the shadows of being, are proportioned to our low and groveling thoughts. That beauty, which thou hast poured out on thy creation, is as a veil which hides thee from our eyes. As thou art a Being too pure and exalted to pass through our senses, thou art not regarded by men, who have debased their nature, and have made themselves like the beasts that perish. So infatuated are they, that, notwithstanding they know what is wisdom and virtue, which have neither sound, nor colour, nor smell, nor taste, nor figure, nor any other sensible quality, they can doubt of thy existence, because thou art not apprehended by the grosser organs of sense. Wretches that we are; we consider shadows as realities, and truth as a phantom. That which is nothing is all to us, and that which is all appears to us nothing. What do we see in all nature but thee, O my God! Thou, and only thou appearest in every thing. When I consider thee, O Lord, I am swallowed up and lost in contemplation of thee. Every thing besides thee, even my own existence, vanishes and disappears in the contemplation of thee. I am lost to myself, and fall into nothing, when I think on thee. The man, who does not see thee, has beheld no-

thing; he, who does not taste thee, has a relish of nothing. His being is vain, and his life but a dream. Set up thyself, O Lord, set up thyself, that we may behold thee. As wax consumes before the fire, and as the smoke is driven away, so let thine enemies vanish out of thy presence. How unhappy is that soul, who, without the sense of thee, has no God, no hope, no comfort to support him! But how happy the man who searches, sighs, and thirsts after thee! But he only is fully happy, on whom thou liftest up the light of thy countenance, whose tears thou hast wiped away, and who enjoys, in thy lovingkindness the completion of all his desires. How long, O Lord, shall I wait for that day when I shall possess, in thy presence, full of joy and pleasures for evermore! O God, in this pleasing hope, my bones rejoice, and cry out, Who is like unto thee? My heart melts away, and my soul faints within me, when I look up to thee, who art the portion of my life, and my portion to all eternity!

SECTION III. THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

Visu carentem magna pars veri latet.
SEN. IN CEDIR.

very reasonable to believe, that part of pleasure, which happy minds shall enjoy future state, will arise from an enlarged implantation of the Divine Wisdom in the nment of the world, and a discovery of ecret and amazing steps of Providence, the beginning to the end of time. No seems to be an entertainment more ed to the nature of man, if we consider riosity is one of the strongest and most g appetites implanted in us, and that ration is one of our most pleasing pas- ; and what a perpetual succession of ents will be afforded to both these in a so large and various as shall then be pen to our view in the society of supe- pirit, who perhaps will join with us in so itful a prospect ! is not impossible, on the contrary, that if the punishment of such as are excluded bliss, may consist not only in their being d this privilege, but in having their apper- t the same time vastly increased, with-

out any satisfaction afforded to them by these, the vain pursuit of knowledge perhaps, add to their infelicity, and be them into labyrinths of error, darkness, traction, and uncertainty of every thing in their own evil state. Milton has thus sented the fallen angels reasoning together a kind of respite from their torment creating to themselves a new disquiet and their very amusements: he could neverly have described the sports of condemned spirits without that cast of horror and melancholy he has so judiciously mingle them.

*Others apart sat on a hill retir'd,
In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd h
Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, an
Fixt Fate, Freewill, Foreknowledge abso
And found no end, in wandering mazes k*

In our present condition, which is a state, our minds are, as it were, cluttered with truth and falsehood; and as our fancies are narrow, and our views imperfect, impossible but our curiosity must meet many repulses. The business of man in this life being rather to act than to know, a portion of knowledge is dealt to them singly.

From hence it is that the reasoner *inquisitive has so long been exercised by difficulties, in accounting for the ex*

ous distribution of good and evil to the virtuous and the wicked in this world. From hence come all those pathetical complaints of so many tragical events, which happen to the wise and the good; and of such surprising prosperity, which is often the reward of the guilty and the foolish; that reason is sometimes puzzled, and at a loss what to pronounce upon so mysterious a dispensation.

Plato expresses his abhorrence of some fables of the poets, which seem to reflect on the Gods as the authors of injustice; and lays it down as a principle, that, whatever is permitted to befall a just man, whether poverty, sickness, or any of those things which seem to be evils, shall either in life or death conduce to his good. My reader will observe how agreeable this maxim is to what we find delivered by a greater authority. Seneca has written a discourse purposely on this subject; in which he takes pains, after the doctrine of the Stoicks, to show, that adversity is not in itself an evil; and mentions a noble saying of Demetrius, that 'nothing would be more unhappy than a man who had never known affliction.' He compares prosperity to the indulgence of a fond mother to a child, which often proves his ruin; but the affection of the Divine Being to that of a wise father, who would have his sons exercised with labour, disappointment, and pain, that they may

gather strength and improve their fortitude. On this occasion the philosopher rises into that celebrated sentiment, that there is not on earth a spectacle more worthy the regard of a Creator intent on his works, than a brave man superior to his sufferings; to which he adds that it must be a pleasure to Jupiter himself to look down from heaven, and see Cato amidst the ruins of his country preserving his integrity.

This thought will appear yet more reasonable, if we consider human life as a state of probation, and adversity as the post of honour in it, assigned often to the best and most selected spirits.

But what I would chiefly insist on here, is that we are not at present in a proper situation to judge of the counsels by which Providence acts, since but little arrives at our knowledge, and even that little we discern imperfectly; or, according to the elegant figure in Holy Writ, 'We see but in part, and as in a glass darkly.' It is to be considered that Providence in its œconomy regards the whole system of time and things together, so that we cannot discover the beautiful connexions between incidents which lie widely separated in time; and by losing so many links of the chain, our reasonings become broken and imperfect. Thus those "the moral world, which have not an

/ yet have a relative beauty, in respect of
the other parts concealed from us, but open
to his eye, before whom *Past*, *Present*, and *To
come*, are set together in one point of view:
and those events, the permission of which
seems now to accuse his goodness, may, in the
consummation of things, both magnify his
goodness and exalt his wisdom. And this is
enough to check our presumption, since it is
in vain to apply our measures of regularity to
matters of which we know neither the antecedents
nor the consequents, the beginning nor
the end.

I shall relieve my readers from this abstracted thought, by relating here a Jewish tradition concerning Moses, which seems to be a kind of parable, illustrating what I have last mentioned. That great prophet, it is said, was called up, by a voice from heaven, to the top of a mountain; where, in a conference with the Supreme Being, he was permitted to propose to him some questions concerning his administration of the universe. In the midst of this divine colloquy he was commanded to look down on the plain below. At the foot of the mountain there issued out a clear spring of water, at which a soldier alighted from his horse to drink. He was no sooner gone, than a little boy came to the same place; and finding a purse which the soldier had dropped, took it up, and went away with it. Imme-

diately after this came an infirm old man weary with age and travelling; and having quenched his thirst, sat down to rest himself by the side of the spring. The soldier, missing his purse, returns to search for it, and demands it of the old man, who affirms he had not seen it, and appeals to heaven as witness of his innocence. The soldier, not believing his protestation, kills him. Moses fell on his face with horror and amazement when the Divine Voice thus prevented his expostulation; ‘Be not surprised, Moses, to ask why the Judge of the whole earth has suffered this thing to come to pass. The child is the occasion that the blood of the old man is spilt: but know, that the old man whom thou sawest, was the murderer of the child’s father.’

Πάσιν γὰρ εὐφροῦσι συμμαχεῖ τύχη.
FRAG. VET. POET.

THE famous Gratian, in his little book where he lays down maxims for a man’s advancement at court, advises his reader to associate himself with the fortunate, and to shun the company of the unfortunate; which, notwithstanding the baseness of the precept to an honest mind, may have something useful in *for those who push their interest in the world*. *It is certain, a great part of what we c*

Good or ill fortune rises out of right or wrong measures and schemes of life. When I hear a man complain of his being unfortunate in all his undertakings, I shrewdly suspect him for a very weak man in his affairs. In conformity with this way of thinking, Cardinal Richelieu used to say, that unfortunate and imprudent were but two words for the same thing. As the cardinal himself had a great share both of prudence and good fortune, his famous antagonist, the Count d'Olivarez, was disgraced at the court of Madrid, because it was alledged against him, that he had never any success in his undertakings. This, says an eminent author, was indirectly accusing him of imprudence.

Cicero recommended Pompey to the Romans for their general upon three accounts; as he was a man of courage, conduct, and good fortune. It was, perhaps, for the reason above mentioned, namely, that a series of good fortune supposes a prudent management in the person whom it befalls, that not only Sylla the dictator, but several of the Roman emperors, as is still to be seen upon their medals, among their other titles, gave themselves that of *Felix*, or fortunate. The heathens, indeed, seem to have valued a man more for his good fortune than for any other quality, which I think is very natural for those who have not a strong belief of another world.

For how can I conceive a man crowned with many distinguishing blessings, that has not some extraordinary fund of merit and perfection in him, which lies open to the Supreme Eye, though perhaps it is not discovered by my observation? What is the reason Homer's and Virgil's heroes do not form a resolution, or strike a blow, without the conduct and direction of some Deity? Doubtless, because the poets esteemed it the greatest honour to be favoured by the Gods, and thought the best way of praising a man was to recount those favours which naturally implied an extraordinary merit in the person on whom they descended.

Those who believe a future state of rewards and punishments act very absurdly, if they form their opinions of a man's merit from his successes. But certainly, if I thought the whole circle of our being was concluded between our births and deaths, I should think a man's good fortune the measure and standard of his real merit, since Providence would have no opportunity of rewarding his virtue and perfections, but in the present life. A virtuous unbeliever, who lies under the pressure of misfortunes, has reason to cry out, as they say Brutus did a little before his death, 'O virtue, I have worshipped thee as a substantial good; but I find thou art an empty name.'

But to return to our first point: though pru-

dence does undoubtedly, in a great measure, produce our good or ill fortune in the world, it is certain there are many unforeseen accidents and occurrences, which very often pervert the finest schemes that can be laid by human wisdom. The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Nothing less than Infinite Wisdom can have an absolute command over fortune; the highest degree of it which man can possess is by no means equal to fortuitous events, and to such contingencies as may rise in the prosecution of our affairs. Nay, it very often happens, that prudence, which has always in it a great mixture of caution, hinders a man from being so fortunate as he might possibly have been without it. A person who only aims at what is likely to succeed, and follows closely the dictates of human prudence, never meets with those great and unforeseen successes which are often the effect of a sanguine temper, or a more happy rashness; and this, perhaps, may be the reason, that, according to the common observation, fortune, like other females, delights rather in favouring the young than the old.

Upon the whole, since man is so short-sighted a creature, and the accidents which may happen to him so various, I cannot but be of Dr. Tillotson's opinion in another case, *that were there any doubt of a Providence,*

yet it certainly would be very desirable should be such a Being of infinite and goodness, on whose direction we rely in the conduct of human life.

It is a great presumption to ascribe successes to our own management, & to esteem ourselves upon any blessing as it is the bounty of heaven than the sition of our own prudence. I am ver pleased with a medal which was struck Queen Elizabeth, a little after the destruction of the Invincible Armada, to perpetuate the memory of that extraordinary event well known how the king of Spain and who were the enemies of that great power to derogate from her glory, ascribed the loss of their fleet rather to the violence of wind and tempests, than to the bravery of the English. Queen Elizabeth, instead of regarding this as a diminution of her valued herself upon such a signal favor of Providence, and accordingly, in the reverse of the medal above mentioned, has represented a fleet beaten by a tempest, and cast foul upon one another, with that remarkable inscription, ‘Afflavit Deus, et dissipaverunt eis ventus. He blew with his wind, and they were scattered.’

It is remarked of a famous Greek general, whose name I cannot at present recollect, and who had been a particular favorite

ine, that, upon recounting his victories
ng his friends, he added, at the end of
al great actions, 'And in this Fortune
no share.'—After which it is observed in
ry, that he never prospered in any thing
ndertook.

arrogance, and a conceitedness of our
abilities, are very shocking and offensive
en of sense and virtue, we may be sure
are highly displeasing to that Being who
huts in an humble mind, and by several
is dispensations seems purposely to show
hat our own schemes or prudence have no
e in our advancements.

nce on this subject I have already ad-
ed several quotations which have occurred
y memory upon writing this paper, I will
lude it with a little Persian fable. A drop
water fell out of a cloud into the sea, and
ng itself lost in such an immensity of
matter, broke out into the following
ction : ' Alas, what an insignificant crea-
am I in this prodigious ocean of waters!
existence is of no concern to the uni-
; I am reduced to a kind of nothing,
am less than the least of the works of
' It so happened that an oyster, which
n the neighbourhood of this drop, chanced
pe and swallow it up in the midst of this
umble soliloquy. The drop, says the fable,
great while hardening in the shell, till by

degrees it was ripened into a pearl, which falling into the hands of a diver, after a long series of adventures, is at present that famous pearl which is fixed on the top of the Persian diadem.

L.

Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidum ferient ruine. Hor.

MAN, considered in himself, is a very helpless and a very wretched being. He is subject every moment to the greatest calamities and misfortunes. He is beset with dangers on all sides, and may become unhappy by numberless casualties, which he could not foresee, nor have prevented, had he foreseen them.

It is our comfort, while we are obnoxious to so many accidents, that we are under the care of one who directs contingencies, and has in his hands the management of every thing that is capable of annoying or offending us; who knows the assistance we stand in need of, and is always ready to bestow it on those who trust it of him.

The natural homage, which such a creature bears to so infinitely wise and good a Being, a firm reliance on him for the blessings and conveniences of life, and an habitual trust in him for deliverance out of all such dangerous difficulties as may befall us.

The man, who always lives in this

tion of mind, has not the same dark and melancholy views of human nature, as he who considers himself abstractedly from this relation to the Supreme Being. At the same time that he reflects upon his own weakness and imperfection, he comforts himself with the contemplation of those divine attributes, which are employed for his safety and his welfare. He finds his want of foresight made up by the omniscience of him who is his support. He is not sensible of his own want of strength, when he knows that his helper is Almighty. In short, the person who has a firm trust on the Supreme Being, is powerful in his power, wise by his wisdom, happy by his happiness. He reaps the benefit of every Divine attribute, and loses his own insufficiency in the fulness of infinite perfection.

To make our lives more easy to us, we are commanded to put our trust in him, who is thus able to relieve and succour us; the Divine goodness having made such a reliance a duty, notwithstanding we should have been miserable, had it been forbidden us.

Among several motives, which might be made use of to recommend this duty to us, I shall only take notice of those that follow.

The first and strongest is, that we are promised, he will not fail those who put their trust in him.

But, without considering the supernatural

blessing which accompanies this duty, we may observe, that it has a natural tendency to its own reward, or in other words, that this firm trust and confidence in the great Disposer of all things contributes very much to the getting clear of any affliction, or to the bearing it manfully. A person who believes he has his succour at hand, and that he acts in sight of his friend, often exerts himself beyond his abilities, and does wonders, that are not to be matched by one who is not animated with such a confidence of success. I could produce instances from history, of generals, who, out of a belief that they were under the protection of some invisible assistant, did not only encourage their soldiers to do their utmost, but have acted themselves beyond what they would have done, had they not been inspired by such a belief. I might in the same manner show how such a trust in the assistance of an Almighty Being naturally produces patience, hope, cheerfulness, and all other dispositions of mind, that alleviate those calamities which we are not able to remove.

The practice of this virtue administers great comfort to the mind of man in times of poverty and affliction, but most of all in the hour of death. When the soul is hovering in the last moments of its separation, when it is just entering on another state of existence, to converse with scenes, and objects, and companions that

gether new, what can support her under
emblings of thought, such fear, such
, such apprehensions, but the casting
er cares upon Him who first gave her
who has conducted her through one
f it, and will be always with her, to
nd comfort her in her progress through
,

ld has very beautifully represented this
reliance on God Almighty, in his
third Psalm, which is a kind of pastoral
and filled with those allusions which are
n that kind of writing. As the poetry
r exquisite, I shall present my reader
e following translation of it.

I.

Lord my pasture shall prepare,
d feed me with a Shepherd's care :
presence shall my wants supply,
d guard me with a watchful eye ;
noon-day walks he shall attend,
d all my midnight hours defend.

II.

hen in the sultry glebe I faint,
on the thirsty mountain pant ;
fertile vales, and dewy meads,
y weary wand'ring steps he leads ;
here peaceful rivers, soft and slow,
nd the verdant landscape flow.

III.

ough in the paths of death I tread,
ith gloomy horrors overspread,
stedfast heart shall fear no ill,
thou, O Lord, art with me still ;

SECTION IV.

THE WORSHIP OF GOD

*Religentem esse oportet, Religio
Incerti Autoris Apropositum*

It is of the last importance to see that the first impressions of a child with devotion, & piety, & that it dies in a mind that has received a strong & permanent impression of the nature of it. Though it may seem that the mind is easily led astray by the cares of life, or the allurements of the world, & that it generally breaks out and discovers itself in various ways, as soon as discretion & consideration are called into play.

mind to great conceptions, and fills it with more sublime ideas than any that are to be met with in the most exalted science ; and at the same time warms and agitates the soul more than sensual pleasure.

It has been observed by some writers, that man is more distinguished from the animal world by devotion than by reason, as several brute creatures discover in their actions something like a faint glimmering of reason, though they betray in no single circumstance of their behaviour any thing that bears the least affinity to devotion. It is certain, the propensity of the mind to religious worship, the natural tendency of the soul to fly to some superior Being for succour in dangers and distresses, the gratitude to an invisible Superintendent, which arises in us upon receiving any extraordinary and unexpected good fortune, the acts of love and admiration with which the thoughts of men are so wonderfully transported in meditating upon the Divine perfections, and the universal concurrence of all the nations under heaven in the great article of adoration, plainly show that devotion or religious worship must be the effect of a tradition from some first founder of mankind, or that it is conformable to the natural light of reason, or that it proceeds from an instinct implanted in the soul itself. For my part, I look upon all these to be the concurrent causes ; but whichever of them shall be assigned as the principle of

vine worship, it manifestly points to a Supreme Being, as the first author of it.

I may take some other opportunity of considering those particular forms and methods of devotion, which are taught us by Christianity; but I shall here observe into what errors even this divine principle may sometimes lead us, when it is not moderated by that right reason, which was given us as the guide of all our actions.

The two great errors, into which a mistaken devotion may betray us, are Enthusiasm and Superstition.

There is not a more melancholy object than a man, who has his head turned with religious enthusiasm. A person that is crazed, though with pride or malice, is a sight very mortifying to human nature: but when the distemper arises from any indiscreet fervours of devotion, or too intense an application of the mind to its mistaken duties, it deserves our compassion in a more particular manner. We may, however, learn this lesson from it, that since devotion itself (which one would be apt to think could not be too warm) may disorder the mind, unless its heats are tempered with caution and prudence, we should be particularly careful to keep our reason as cool as possible, and to guard ourselves in all parts of life against the influence of passion, imagination, and ~~excitation~~:

Devotion, when it does not lie under

ck of reason, is very apt to degenerate into enthusiasm. When the mind finds herself very much inflamed with her devotions, she is so much inclined to think they are not of her own kindling, but blown up with something divine within her. If she indulges this thought so far, and humours the growing passion, she last flings herself into imaginary raptures and ecstasies; and when once she fancies herself under the influence of a divine impulse, it is no wonder if she slight human ordinances, and refuses to comply with any established form of religion, as thinking herself directed by a much superior guide.

As enthusiasm is a kind of excess in devotion, superstition is the excess not only of devotion, but of religion in general; according to an old heathen saying, quoted by Aulus Gellius, *Religentem esse oportet, Religiosum fas*; A man should be religious, not superstitious: for, as the author tells us, Nigidius observed upon this passage, that the Latin words which terminate in *osus* generally imply vicious characters, and the having of any quality to an excess.

An enthusiast in religion is like an obstinate fool, a superstitious man like an insipid curtizier. Enthusiasm has something in it of madness; superstition, of folly. Most of the sects that fall short of the Church of England have in them strong tinctures of enthusiasm.

On the contrary, a
never so ridiculous, which has taken sanctu
in the church, sticks in it for ever. A Go
bishop, perhaps, thought it proper to rej
such a form in such particular shoes or s
pers ; another fancied it would be very dec
if such a part of public devotions were
formed with a mitre on his head, and a cr
in his hand : to this a brother Vandal, as
as the others, adds an antic dress, whic
conceived would allude very aptly to such
such mysteries ; till by degrees the whole
has degenerated into an empty show.

Their successors see the vanity and i
venience of these ceremonies ; but, inste
reforming, perhaps add others, which
..... and which take

Nothing is so glorious in the eyes of mankind, and ornamental to human nature, setting aside the infinite advantages which arise from it, as a strong, steady, masculine piety: but enthusiasm and superstition are the weaknesses of human reason, that expose us to the scorn and derision of infidels, and sink us even below the beasts that perish.

Idolatry may be looked upon as another error arising from mistaken devotion: but because reflections on that subject would be of no use to an English reader, I shall not enlarge upon it.

L,

Omnibus in terris, quæ sunt a Gadibus usque
Auroram et Gangem, pauci dignoscere possunt
Vera bona, atque illis multum diversa, remota
Erroris nebula—. Juv.

In my last Saturday's paper I laid down some thoughts upon devotion in general, and shall here show what were the notions of the most refined Heathens on this subject, as they are represented in Plato's dialogue upon Prayer, entitled, Alcibiades the Second; which doubtless gave occasion to Juvenal's tenth Satire, and to the second Satire of Persius; as the last of these authors has almost transcribed the preceding dialogue, entitled, Alcibiades the First, in his fourth Satire.

The speakers in this dialogue upon Prayer are Socrates and Alcibiades; and the sub-

stance of it (when drawn together out of the intricacies and digressions) as follows.

Socrates meeting his pupil Alcibiades, as he was going to his devotions, and observing his eyes to be fixed upon the earth with great seriousness and attention, tells him, that he had reason to be thoughtful on that occasion, since it was possible for a man to bring down evils upon himself by his own prayers ; and that those things which the gods send him, in answer to his petitions, might turn to his destruction : This, says he, may not only happen, when a man prays for what he knows is mischievous in its own nature, as Oedipus implored the gods to sow dissension between his sons ; but when he prays for what he believes would be for his good, and against what he believes would be to his detriment. This the philosopher shows must necessarily happen among us, since most men are blinded with ignorance, prejudice, or passion, which hinder them from seeing such things as are really beneficial to them. For an instance, he asks Alcibiades, whether he would not be thoroughly pleased and satisfied, if that God, to whom he was going to address himself, should promise to make him the sovereign of the whole earth ? Alcibiades answers, That he should doubtless look upon such a promise as the greatest favour that could be bestowed upon him. Socrates then asks him, if, after receiving this

great favour, he would be contented to lose his life? or if he would receive it, though he was sure he should make an ill use of it? To both which questions Alcibiades answers in the negative. Socrates then shows him, from the examples of others, how these might probably be the effects of such a blessing. He then adds, that other reputed pieces of good fortune, as that of having a son, or procuring the highest post in a government, are subject to the like fatal consequences; which nevertheless, says he, men ardently desire, and would not fail to pray for, if they thought their prayers might be effectual for the obtaining of them.

Having established this great point, that all the most apparent blessings in this life are obnoxious to such dreadful consequences, and that no man knows what in its events would prove to him a blessing or a curse, he teaches Alcibiades after what manner he ought to pray.

In the first place, he recommends to him, as the model of his devotions, a short prayer, which a Greek poet composed for the use of his friends, in the following words: 'O Jupiter, give us those things which are good for us, whether they be such things as we pray for, or such things as we do not pray for; and remove from us those things which are hurtful, though they are such things as we pray for.'

In the second place, that his disciple may ask such things as are expedient for him, he shows him, that it is absolutely necessary to apply himself to the study of true wisdom, and to the knowledge of that which is his chief good, and the most suitable to the excellency of his nature.

In the third and last place he informs him, that the best methods he could make use of to draw down blessings upon himself, and to render his prayers acceptable, would be to live in a constant practice of his duty towards the gods and towards men. Under this head he very much recommends a form of prayer the Lacedæmonians made use of, in which they petition the gods to give them all good things, so long as they were virtuous. Under this head likewise he gives a very remarkable account of an oracle, to the following purpose.

When the Athenians, in the war with the Lacedæmonians, received many defeats both by sea and land, they sent a message to the oracle of Jupiter Ammon, to ask the reason why they, who erected so many temples to the gods, and adorned them with such costly offerings; why they, who had instituted so many festivals, and accompanied them with such pomps and ceremonies; in short, why they, who had slain so many hecatombs at their altars, should be less successful than *Lacedæmonians, who fell so short of them in*

particulars. To this, says he, the oracle the following reply: ‘ I am better

with the prayer of the Lacedæmonians than with all the oblations of the Greeks.’

This prayer implied and encouraged virtue

who made it, the philosopher propo-

to show how the most vicious man might

out, so far as victims could make him; at his offerings were regarded by the

bribes, and his petitions as blasphemies.

ewise quotes on this occasion two verses

Homer, in which the poet says, that

nt of the Trojan sacrifices was carried

heaven by the winds; but that it was

ceptable to the gods, who were dis-

with Priam and all his people.

conclusion of this dialogue is very re-

ble. Socrates having deterred Alcibiades

the prayers and sacrifice which he

wanting to offer, by setting forth the above-

mentioned difficulties of performing that duty

ought, adds these words: We must

wait till such time as we may learn

we ought to behave ourselves towards the

nd towards men.—But when will that

ome? says Alcibiades; and who is it

struct us? for I would fain see this man,

er he is.—It is one, says Socrates, who

are of you: but as Homer tells us, that

removed the mist from Diomede’s

at he might plainly discover both gods

and men ; so the darkness that hangs upon your mind must be removed, before you are able to discern what is good and what is evil.— Let him remove from my mind, says Alcibiades, the darkness, and what else he pleases ; I am determined to refuse nothing he shall order me, whoever he is, so that I may become the better man by it.—The remaining part of this dialogue is very obscure : there is something in it, that would make us think Socrates hinted at himself, when he spoke of this Divine Teacher, who was to come into the world, did he not own that he himself was in this respect as much at a loss, and in as great distress, as the rest of mankind.

Some learned men look upon this conclusion as a prediction of our Saviour, or at least that Socrates, like the high-priest, prophesied unknowingly, and pointed at that Divine Teacher, who was to come into the world some ages after him. However that may be, we find that this great philosopher saw, by the light of reason, that it was suitable to the goodness of the Divine Nature, to send a person into the world, who should instruct mankind in the duties of religion, and, in particular, teach them how to pray.

Whoever reads this abstract of Plato's Discourse on Prayer, will, I believe, naturally *make this reflection* ; that the great Founder of our religion, as well by his own example,

as in the form of prayer which he taught his disciples, did not only keep up to those rules which the light of nature had suggested to this great philosopher, but instructed his disciples in the whole extent of this duty, as well as of all others. He directed them to the proper object of adoration, and taught them, according to the third rule above mentioned, to apply themselves to him in their closets, without show or ostentation ; and to worship him in spirit and in truth. As the Lacedæmonians, in their form of prayer, implored the gods in general to give them all good things so long as they were virtuous, we ask in particular that our offences may be forgiven as we forgive those of others. If we look into the second rule, which Socrates has prescribed, namely, that we should apply ourselves to the knowledge of such things as are best for us, this too is explained at large in the doctrines of the gospel, where we are taught in several instances to regard those things as curses, which appear as blessings in the eye of the world ; and, on the contrary, to esteem those things as blessings, which to the generality of mankind appear as curses. Thus in the form which is prescribed to us we only pray for that happiness which is our chief good, and the great end of our existence, when we petition the Supreme Being for the coming of *his kingdom* ; being solicitous for no other *temporal blessing* but our daily sustenance.

On the other side, we pray against nothing but sin, and against evil in general, leaving it with Omniscience to determine what is really such. If we look into the first of Socrates's rules of prayer, in which he recommends the above-mentioned form of the ancient poet, we find that form not only comprehended, but very much improved in the petition, wherein we pray to the Supreme Being, that his will may be done ; which is of the same force with that form which our Saviour used, when he prayed against the most painful and most ignominious of deaths, *Nevertheless not my will, but thine be done.*—This comprehensive petition is the most humble, as well as the most prudent, that can be offered up from the creature to his Creator, as it supposes the Supreme Being wills nothing but what is for our good, and that he knows better than ourselves what is so.

L.

SECTION V.

ADVANTAGES OF REVELATION ABOVE NATURAL REASON.

—*Quicquid dignum sapiente bonoque est.*
HOR.

RELIGION may be considered under two general heads. The first comprehends what we are to believe, the other what we are to practise. By those things which we are to believe,

I mean whatever is revealed to us in the Holy Writings, and which we could not have obtained the knowledge of by the light of nature : by the things which we are to practise, I mean all those duties to which we are directed by reason or natural religion. The first of these I shall distinguish by the name of Faith ; the second, by that of Morality.

If we look into the more serious part of mankind, we find many who lay so great a stress upon faith, that they neglect morality ; and many who build so much upon morality, that they do not pay a due regard to faith. The perfect man should be defective in neither of these particulars, as will be very evident to those who consider the benefits which arise from each of them, and which I shall make the subject of this day's paper.

Notwithstanding this general division of Christian duty into Morality and Faith, and that they have both their peculiar excellencies, the first has the pre-eminence in several respects.

First, Because the greatest part of morality (as I have stated the notion of it) is of a fixed, eternal nature, and will endure when faith shall fail, and be lost in conviction.

Secondly, Because a person may be qualified to do greater good to mankind, and become more beneficial to the world, by morality with out faith, than by faith without morality.

**much more certain than
civilized nations of the w
great points of morality, :
in those of faith.**

Fifthly, Because infidel
lignant a nature as immo
same reason in another li
nearly owned, there ma
virtuous infidel, (particula
vincible ignorance,) but n
iever.

Sixthly, Because faith
principal, if not all its ex
fluence it has upon morali
more at large, if we consi
the excellency of faith or +

Fourthly, By showing us the blackness and formity of vice, which in the Christian system is so very great, that he who is possessed of all perfection, and the Sovereign Judge of it, is represented by several of our divines as hating sin to the same degree that he loves the sacred Person who was made the propitiation of it.

Fifthly, In being the ordinary and prescribed method of making morality effectual to salvation.

I have only touched on these several heads, which every one who is conversant in discourses of this nature will easily enlarge upon in his own thoughts, and draw conclusions from them, which may be useful to him in the conduct of his life. One, I am sure, is so obvious that he cannot miss it, namely, that a man cannot be perfect in his scheme of morality, who does not strengthen and support it with that of the Christian faith.

Besides this, I shall lay down two or three other maxims, which I think we may deduce from what has been said.

First, That we should be particularly cautious of making any thing an article of faith, which does not contribute to the confirmation or improvement of morality.

Secondly, That no article of faith can be *true and authentic*, which weakens or subverts the practical part of religion, or what I have *hitherto called morality*.

siderations, which is this ; that all dubious points, consequences that may arise from it they should be erroneous, before assent to them.

For example, in that dispensing persecuting men for conscience sake, embittering their minds with indignation, and all the vehemence, and ensnaring them to particular do not believe, we cut them off from the pleasures and advantages of society, distress their fortunes,

thinks the true system of faith may justify it, is very uncertain. I cannot but think, if our religion produce charity as well as zeal, it will not be for showing itself by such cruel instances. But, to conclude with the words of an excellent author, ‘ We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another.’

C.

Οὐδεὶς τῶν διόμενος ἔγινε θεῖν.

SOCRATES APUD XEN.

IT was the common boast of the heathen philosophers, that, by the efficacy of their several doctrines, they made human nature resemble the divine. How much mistaken soever they might be in the several means they proposed for this end, it must be owned, that the design was great and glorious. The finest works of invention and imagination are of very little weight, when put in the balance with what refines and exalts the rational mind. Longinus excuses Homer very handsomely, when he says the poet made his gods like men, that he might make his men appear like the gods. But it must be allowed that several of the ancient philosophers acted as Cicero wishes Homer had done; they endeavoured rather to make men like gods, than gods like men.

According to this general maxim in philosophy, some of them have endeavoured to

place men in such a state of pleasure, or indolence at least, as they vainly imagined the happiness of the Supreme Being to consist in. On the other hand, the most virtuous sect of philosophers have created a chimerical wise man, whom they made exempt from passion and pain, and thought it enough to pronounce him all-sufficient.

This last character, when divested of the glare of human philosophy that surrounds it, signifies no more, than that a good and wise man should so arm himself with patience, as not to yield tamely to the violence of passion and pain ; that he should learn so to suppress and contract his desires, as to have few wants ; and that he should cherish so many virtues in his soul, as to have a perpetual source of pleasure in himself.

The Christian religion requires, that, after having framed the best idea we are able of the Divine Nature, it should be our next care to conform ourselves to it, as far as our imperfections will permit. I might mention several passages in the Sacred Writings on this head, to which I might add many maxims and wise sayings of moral authors among the Greeks and Romans.

I shall only instance a remarkable passage, to this purpose, out of Julian's Cæsars. The emperor having represented all the Roman emperors, with Alexander the Great, as passing

in review before the gods, and striving for the superiority, lets them all drop, excepting Alexander, Julius Cæsar, Augustus Cæsar, Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, and Constantine. Each of these great heroes of antiquity lays in his claim for the upper place ; and, in order to it, sets forth his actions after the most advantageous manner. But the gods, instead of being dazzled with the lustre of their actions, inquire, by Mercury, into the proper motive and governing principle that influenced them throughout the whole series of their lives and exploits. Alexander tells them, that his aim was to conquer ; Julius Cæsar, that his was to gain the highest post in his country ; Augustus, to govern well ; Trajan, that his was the same as that of Alexander, namely, to conquer. The question, at length, was put to Marcus Aurelius, who replied, with great modesty, that it had always been his care to imitate the gods. This conduct seems to have gained him the most votes and best place in the whole assembly. Marcus Aurelius being afterwards asked to explain himself, declares, that, by imitating the gods, he endeavoured to imitate them in the use of his understanding, and of all other faculties ; and in particular, that it was always his study to have as few wants as possible in himself, and to do all the good he could to others.

Among the many methods, by which 152

vealed religion has advanced morality one ; that it has given us a more just & perfect idea of that Being whom every creature ought to imitate. The you in a heathen comedy, might justify hardness by the example of Jupiter : as, there was scarce any crime, that might be countenanced by those notions of the which prevailed among the common in the heathen world. Revealed religion forth a proper object for imitation, Being who is the pattern, as well as the of all spiritual perfection.

While we remain in this life, we are to innumerable temptations, which, if to, will make us deviate from reason and goodness, the only things wherein we can see the Supreme Being. In the next life with nothing to excite our inclination doth not deserve them. I shall therefore miss my reader with this maxim, viz. Happiness in this world proceeds from the suppression of our desires ; but in the next from the gratification of them.

— Quis enim virtutem amplectitur in
Præmia si tollas ?

It is usual with polemical writers to design their *adversaries*. This turns the argument into satire, which, instead

ing an error in the understanding, tends only to expose the morals of those they write against. I shall not act after this manner with respect to the Freethinkers. Virtue, and the happiness of society, are the great ends which all men ought to promote, and some of that sect would be thought to have at heart above the rest of mankind. But supposing those who make that profession to carry on a good design in the simplicity of their hearts, and according to their best knowledge, yet it is much to be feared, those well-meaning souls, while they endeavoured to recommend virtue, have in reality been advancing the interest of vice; which as I take to proceed from their ignorance of human nature, we may hope, when they become sensible of their mistake, they will, in consequence of that beneficent principle they pretend to act upon, reform their practice for the future.

The sages, whom I have in my eye, speak of virtue as the most amiable thing in the world; but at the same time that they extol her beauty, they take care to lessen her portion. Such innocent creatures are they, and so great strangers to the world, that they think this a likely method to increase the number of her admirers.

Virtue has in herself the most engaging charms; and Christianity, as it places her in the strongest light, and adorned with all her

native attractions, so it kindles a new fire in the soul, by adding to them the unutterable rewards which attend her votaries in an eternal state. Or if there are men of a saturnine and heavy complexion, who are not easily lifted up by hope, there is the prospect of everlasting punishment to agitate their souls, and to frighten them into the practice of virtue, and an aversion from vice.

Whereas your sober Freethinkers tell you, that virtue indeed is beautiful, and vice deformed; the former deserves your love, and the latter your abhorrence: but then it is for their own sake, or on account of the good and evil which immediately attend them, and are inseparable from their respective natures. As for the immortality of the soul, or eternal punishments and rewards, those are openly ridiculed, or rendered suspicious by the most sly and laboured artifice.

I will not say, these men act treacherously in the cause of virtue: but will any one deny that they act foolishly, who pretend to advance the interest of it by destroying or weakening the strongest motives to it, which are accommodated to all capacities, and fitted to work on all dispositions, and enforcing those alone which can affect only a generous and exalted mind?

Surely they must be destitute of passion themselves, and unacquainted with the force



it hath on the minds of others, who can imagine that the mere beauty of fortitude, temperance, and justice, is sufficient to sustain the mind of man in a severe course of self-denial against all the temptations of present profit and sensuality.

It is my opinion, the Freethinkers should be treated as a set of poor ignorant creatures, that have not sense to discover the excellency of religion ; it being evident those men are no witches, nor likely to be guilty of any deep design, who proclaim aloud to the world, that they have less motives of honesty than the rest of their fellow-subjects ; who have all the inducements to the exercise of any virtue which a Freethinker can possibly have, and, besides, the expectation of never-ending happiness or misery, as the consequence of their choice.

Are not men actuated by their passions ? and are not hope and fear the most powerful of our passions ? and are there any objects, which can rouse and awaken our hopes and fears, like those prospects that warm and penetrate the heart of a Christian, but are not regarded by a Freethinker ?

It is not only a clear point, that a Christian breaks through stronger engagements, whenever he surrenders himself to commit a criminal action, and is stung with a sharper remorse *after it, than a Freethinker* ; but it should even seem that a man, who believes no future state,

greater future good. But such view, should yet c himself a present good in, he may save appearance stupid as he that would t juncture.

It will perhaps be said, own reward ; that a nature tends good actions, which excite men to the performance although there is nothing virtue, and the practice of to solid natural happiness,

refined spirits, capable only of being enamoured of virtue; yet what would become of the bulk of mankind, who have gross understandings, but lively senses and strong passions? What a deluge of lust, and fraud, and violence, would in a little time overflow the whole nation, if these wise advocates for morality were universally hearkened to! Lastly, opportunities do sometimes offer, in which a man may wickedly make his fortune, or indulge a pleasure, without fear of temporal damage, either in reputation, health, or fortune. In such cases what restraint do they lie under, who have no regards beyond the grave? the inward compunctions of a wicked, as well as the joys of an upright mind being grafted on the sense of another state.

The thought, that our existence terminates with this life, doth naturally check the soul in any generous pursuit, contract her views, and fix them on temporary and selfish ends. It dethrones the reason, extinguishes all noble and heroic sentiments, and subjects the mind to the slavery of every present passion. The wise heathens of antiquity were not ignorant of this: hence they endeavoured, by fables and conjectures, and the glimmerings of nature, to possess the minds of men with the belief of a future state; which has been since brought to light by the Gospel, and is now most inconsistently decried by a few weak



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lighted with the sense tha
prevail among men, it i
flection to think that
which among the hea
there one of brighter pa
than ordinary could atta
familiar to the meanest
nations.

Whence came this sur
regions formerly inhabite
savage people should m
Greece, and the other
renowned of old, in the
of theology etc.

not direct atheists, charity would incline one to believe them ignorant of what is here advanced. And it is for their information that I write this paper, the design of which is to compare the ideas that Christians entertain of the being and attributes of a God, with the gross notions of the heathen world. Is it possible for the mind of man to conceive a more august idea of the Deity, than is set forth in the holy Scriptures? I shall throw together some passages relating to this subject, which I propose only as philosophical sentiments, to be considered by a Freethinker.

“ Though there be that are called gods, yet to us there is but one God. He made the heaven and heaven of heavens, with all their host; the earth and all things that are therein; the seas and all that is therein: he said, Let hem be, and it was so. He hath stretched out the heavens. He hath founded the earth, and hung it upon nothing. He hath shut up the sea with doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed. The Lord is an invisible Spirit, in whom we live, and move, and are our being. He is the fountain of life. preserveth man and beast. He giveth food to flesh. In his hand is the soul of every thing, and the breath of all mankind. *Lord maketh poor and maketh rich. He killeth and maketh alive. He bringeth down and liftest up. He maketh low and exalteth high.*

down. He thundereth with
recteth it under the whole
lightning unto the ends of the
hail, snow and vapour, wind
his word. The Lord is King
and his dominion is an ever
The earth and the heavens
thou, O Lord, remainest. I
old, as doth a garment, and
thou fold them up, and they
but thou art the same, and th
no end. God is perfect in
understanding is infinite. I
lights. He looketh to the e
and seeth under the whole he

mercies are over all his works. He is a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widow. He is the God of peace, the father of mercies, and the God of all comfort and consolation. The Lord is great, and we know him not: his greatness is unsearchable. Who but he hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out the heavens with a span? Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty. Thou art very great, thou art clothed with honour. Heaven is thy throne, and earth is thy footstool.'

Can the mind of a philosopher rise to a more just and magnificent, and, at the same time, a more amiable idea of the Deity, than is here set forth in the strongest images and most emphatical language? And yet this is the language of shepherds and fishermen. The illiterate Jews and poor persecuted Christians retained these noble sentiments, while the polite and powerful nations of the earth were given up to that sottish sort of worship, of which the following elegant description is extracted from one of the inspired writers.

'Who hath formed a god or molten an image that is profitable for nothing? The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, *he is hungry and his strength faileth.* He

drinketh no water, and is faint. A man planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. He burneth part thereof in the fire. He roasteth roast. He warmeth himself. And the residue thereof he maketh a god. He falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my God. None considereth in his heart, I have burnt part of it in the fire; yea, also, I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it; and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?

In such circumstances as these for a man to declare for freethinking, and disengage himself from the yoke of idolatry, were doing honour to human nature, and a work well becoming the great asserters of reason. But in a church, where our adoration is directed to the Supreme Being, and (to say the least) where is nothing, either in the object or manner of worship, that contradicts the light of nature, there, under the pretence of free-thinking, to rail at the religious institutions of their country, sheweth an undistinguishing genius, that mistakes opposition for freedom of thought. And, indeed, notwithstanding the pretences of some few among our Free-thinkers, I can hardly think there are men so stupid and inconsistent with themselves as to have a serious regard for natural religion, and

the same time use their utmost endeavours to destroy the credit of those sacred writings, which as they have been the means of bringing these parts of the world to the knowledge of natural religion, so in case they lose their authority over the minds of men, we should course sink into the same idolatry which is seen practised by other unenlightened nations.

If a person, who exerts himself in the modern way of freethinking, be not a stupid boaster, it is undeniable that he contributes what he can to the making other men so, either through ignorance or design; which lays him under a dilemma, I will not say of being a fool or knave, but of incurring the contempt or testation of mankind.

SECTION VI.

EXCELLENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTION.

— Aptissima quæque dabunt dii,
Charior est illis homo, quam sibi.—

Juv.

It is owing to pride, and a secret affectation of a certain self-existence, that the noblest motive for action that ever was proposed to man is not acknowledged the glory and hap-

wholly disinterested, :
views arising from sel
But however spirits o
may disdain at first sight
from a noble impulse
any future regards in
upon stricter inquiry
worthily and expect
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duct of hypocrites, that the word Christian does not carry with it at first view all that is great, worthy, friendly, generous, and heroic. The man who suspends his hopes of the reward of worthy actions till after death, who can bestow unseen, who can overlook hatred, do good to his slanderer, who can never be angry at his friend, never revengeful to his enemy, is certainly formed for the benefit of society: yet these are so far from heroic virtues, that they are but the ordinary duties of a Christian.

When a man with a steady faith looks back on the great catastrophe of this day, with what bleeding emotions of heart must he contemplate the life and sufferings of his Deliverer! When his agonies occur to him, how will he weep to reflect that he has often forgot them for the glance of a wanton, for the applause of a vain world, for an heap of fleeting past pleasures, which are at present aching sorrows!

How pleasing is the contemplation of the lowly steps our Almighty Leader took in conducting us to his heavenly mansions! In plain and apt parable, similitude, and allegory, our great Master enforced the doctrine of our salvation: but they of his acquaintance, instead of receiving what they could not oppose, were offended at the presumption of being wiser than they: they could not raise their little

possessing of their narrow affections.

Multitudes followed him, the dumb, the blind, the sick, whom when their Creator gave them a second life they saw, spoke, In affection to him, and actions, the crowd could not wait near him till they were as numerous and helpless as others the world over. He had compassion, a miracle supplied their wants, and gave them an ecstatic entertainment, while

secular prince, yet had not hitherto the Apostles themselves any other hopes than of worldly power, preferment, riches, and pomp: for Peter, upon an accident of ambition among the Apostles, hearing his Master explain that his kingdom was not of this world, was so scandalized, that he whom he had so long followed should suffer the ignominy, shame, and death, which he foretold; that he took him aside, and said, ‘Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee:’ for which he suffered a severe reprobation from his Master, as having in his view the glory of man, rather than that of God.

The great change of things began to draw near, when the Lord of Nature thought fit, as a Saviour and Deliverer, to make his public entry into Jerusalem with more than the power and joy, but none of the ostentation and pomp, of a triumph: he came humble, meek, and lowly: with an unfeigned new ecstasy, multitudes strewed his way with garments and olive-branches, crying with loud gladness and acclamation, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!’ At this great King’s accession to his throne, men were not ennobled, but saved; crimes were not remitted, but sins forgiven; he did not bestow medals, honours, favours; but health, joy, sight, speech. The first object the blind ever saw was the author of sight;

for a time ...
let unbelievers understand,
want of, but superiority to
minion, that made him no
this then the Saviour? is
Shall this obscure Nazarene
and sit on the throne of David?
disdainful hearts, which were
love and pride of this world
to the reception of so meek
were now enough exasperated
to conspire his death.
of their design, and pre-
... pernicious to the ...

' But what heart can conceive, what tongue utter the sequel? Who is that yonder buffeted, mocked, and spurned? Whom do they drag like a felon? Whither do they carry my Lord, my King, my Saviour, and my God? And will he die to expiate those very injuries? See where they have nailed the Lord and giver of life! How his wounds blacken, his body writhes, and heart heaves with pity and with agony! Oh, Almighty Sufferer, look down, look down from thy triumphant infamy: Lo, he inclines his head to his sacred bosom! Hark, he groans! See, he expires! The earth trembles, the temple rends, the rocks burst, the dead arise: Which are the quick? Which are the dead? Sure nature, all nature is departing with her Creator.'

T.

If to inform the understanding, and regulate the will, is the most lasting and diffusive benefit, there will not be found so useful and excellent an institution as that of the Christian Priesthood, which is now become the scorn of fools. That a numerous order of men should be consecrated to the study of the most sublime and beneficial truths, with a design to propagate them by their discourses and writings, to inform their fellow-creatures of the being and attributes of the Deity, to possess their minds with the sense of a future

state, and not only to explain the nature of every virtue and moral duty, but likewise to persuade mankind to the practice of them by the most powerful and engaging motives, is a thing so excellent and necessary to the well-being of the world, that nobody but a modern Freethinker could have the forehead or folly to turn into ridicule.

The light, in which these points should be exposed to the view of one who is prejudiced against the names, religion, church, priest, and the like; is to consider the clergy as so many philosophers, the churches as schools, and their sermons as lectures, for the information and improvement of the audience. How would the heart of a Socrates or Tully have rejoiced, had they lived in a nation, where the law had made provision for philosophers, to read lectures of morality and theology every seventh day, in several thousands of schools erected at the public charge throughout the whole country, at which lectures all ranks and sexes, without distinction, were obliged to be present for their general improvement! And what wicked wretches would they think those men, who should endeavour to defeat the purpose of so divine an institution!

It is indeed usual with that low tribe of writers, to pretend their design is only to reform the church, and expose the vices, and

not the order, of the clergy. The author of a pamphlet printed the other day (which, without my mentioning the title, will on this occasion occur to the thoughts of those who have read it) hopes to insinuate by that artifice what he is afraid or ashamed openly to maintain. But there are two points, which clearly show what it is he aims at. The first is, that he constantly uses the word priest in such a manner, as that his reader cannot but observe he means to throw an odium on the clergy of the Church of England, from their being called by a name which they enjoy in common with heathens and impostors. The other is, his raking together and exaggerating, with great spleen and industry, all those actions of churchmen, which, either by their own illness, or the bad light in which he places them, tend to give men an ill impression of the dispensers of the Gospel: all which he pathetically addresses to the consideration of his wise and honest countrymen of the laity. The sophistry and ill-breeding of these proceedings are so obvious to men who have any pretence to that character, that I need say no more either of them or their author. Z.

SECTION VII.

DIGNITY OF THE SCRIPTURE LANGUAGE.

Οἱ δὲ πανημέριοι μολετῇ θεὸν οἰάσκοντο,
 Καλὸν δεῖδοντες παιῶνα, κῦροι Ἀχαιῶν,
 Μίλποντες Ἐκάργουν· ὃ δὲ φρένα τίστετ' ἀκούειν.
 Hom.

THERE is a certain coldness and indifference in the phrases of our European languages; when they are compared with the oriental forms of speech; and it happens very luckily, that the Hebrew idioms run into the English tongue with a particular grace and beauty. Our language has received innumerable elegancies and improvements, from that infusion of Hebraisms, which are derived to it out of the poetical passages in Holy Writ. They give a force and energy to our expressions, warm and animate our language, and convey our thoughts in more ardent and intense phrases, than any that are to be met with in our own tongue. There is something so pathetic in this kind of diction, that it often sets the mind in a flame, and makes our hearts burn within us. How cold and dead does a prayer appear, that is composed in the most elegant and polite forms of speech, which are natural to our tongue, when it is not heightened by

that solemnity of phrase, which may be drawn from the Sacred Writings! It has been said by some of the ancients, that if the gods were to talk with men, they would certainly talk in Plato's style: but I think we may say with justice, that when mortals converse with their Creator, they cannot do it in so proper a style as in that of the Holy Scriptures.

If any one would judge of the beauties of poetry that are to be met with in the Divine Writings, and examine how kindly the Hebrew manners of speech mix and incorporate with the English language; after having perused the book of Psalms, let him read a literal translation of Horace or Pindar. He will find in these two last such an absurdity and confusion of style, with such a comparative poverty of imagination, as will make him very sensible of what I have been here advancing.

Since we have therefore such a treasury of words, so beautiful in themselves, and so proper for the airs of music, I cannot but wonder that persons of distinction should give so little attention and encouragement to that kind of music which would have its foundation in reason, and which would improve our virtue in proportion as it raised our delight. The passions, that are excited by ordinary compositions, generally flow from such silly and absurd occasions, that a man is ashamed to

reflect upon them seriously : but the fear, the love, the sorrow, the indignation, that are awakened in the mind by hymns and anthems, make the heart better, and proceed from such causes as are altogether reasonable and praiseworthy. Pleasure and duty go hand in hand ; and the greater our satisfaction is, the greater is our religion.

Music, among those who were styled the chosen people, was a religious art. The songs of Sion, which we have reason to believe were in high repute among the courts of the Eastern monarchs, were nothing else but psalms and pieces of poetry, that adored and celebrated the Supreme Being. The greatest conqueror in this holy nation, after the manner of the old Grecian lyrics, did not only compose the words of his divine odes, but generally set them to music himself : after which, his works, though they were consecrated to the tabernacle, became the national entertainment, as well as the devotion of his people.

The first original of the drama was a religious worship, consisting only of a chorus, which was nothing else but an hymn to a deity. As luxury and voluptuousness prevailed over innocence and religion, this form of worship degenerated into tragedies ; in which, however, the chorus so far remembered *its office*, as to brand every thing that was *vicious, and recommend every thing that was*

laudable; to intercede with heaven for the innocent, and to implore its vengeance on the criminal.

Homer and Hesiod intimate to us how this art should be applied, when they represent the Muses as surrounding Jupiter, and warbling their hymns about his throne. I might show from innumerable passages in ancient writers, not only that vocal and instrumental music were made use of in their religious worship, but that their most favourite diversions were filled with songs and hymns to their respective deities. Had we frequent entertainments of this nature among us, they would not a little purify and exalt our passions, give our thoughts a proper turn, and cherish those divine impulses in the soul, which every one feels, that has not stifled them by sensual and immoderate pleasures.

Music, when thus applied, raises noble hints in the mind of the hearer, and fills it with great conceptions. It strengthens devotion, and advances praise into rapture. It lengthens out every act of worship, and produces more lasting and permanent impressions in the mind, than those which accompany any transient form of words, that are uttered in the ordinary method of religious worship.

Q,

— Fungar inau
Munere —

VINC.

Dr. Tillotson, in his discourse concerning ‘the danger of all known sin, both from the light of nature and revelation,’ after having given us the description of the last day out of Holy Writ, has this remarkable passage.

‘ I appeal to any man, whether this be not a representation of things very proper and suitable to that great day, wherein he who made the world shall come to judge it: and whether the wit of man ever devised any thing so awful, and so agreeable to the majesty of God, and the solemn judgment of the whole world. The description, which Virgil makes of the Elysian Fields, and the Infernal Regions, how infinitely do they fall short of the majesty of the Holy Scripture, and the description there made of Heaven and Hell, and of “ the great and terrible day of the Lord ! ” So that in comparison they are childish and trifling ; and yet, perhaps, he had the most regular and most governed imagination of any man that ever lived, and observed the greatest decorum in his characters and descriptions. But who can declare “ the great things of God, but he to whom God shall reveal them ? ” ’

This observation was worthy a most polite man, and ought to be of authority with all

who are such, so far as to examine whether he spoke that as a man of a just taste and judgment, or advanced it merely for the service of his doctrine as a clergyman.

I am very confident whoever reads the Gospels with an heart as much prepared in favour of them, as when he sits down to Virgil or Homer, will find no passage there, which is not told with more natural force than any episode in either of those wits, who were the chief of mere mankind.

The last thing I read was the 24th chapter of St. Luke, which gives an account of the manner in which our blessed Saviour, after his resurrection, joined with two Disciples on the way to Emmaus as an ordinary traveller, and took the privilege as such to inquire of them, what occasioned a sadness he observed in their countenances; or whether it was from any public cause. Their wonder that any man so near Jerusalem should be a stranger to what had passed there; their acknowledgment to one they met accidentally, that they had believed in this Prophet; and that now, the third day after his death, they were in doubt as to their pleasing hope, which occasioned the heaviness he took notice of, are all represented in a style which men of letters call 'the great and noble simplicity.'

The attention of the Disciples, when he expounded the Scriptures concerning himself.

his offering to take his leave of them, their fondness of his stay, and the manifestation of the great guest whom they had entertained, while he was yet at meat with them, are all incidents, which wonderfully please the imagination of a Christian reader; and give to him something of that touch of mind which the brethren felt, when they said to one another, ‘Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?’

I am very far from pretending to treat these matters as they deserve: but I hope those gentlemen, who are qualified for it, and called to it, will forgive me, and consider that I speak as a mere secular man, impartially considering the effect which the Sacred Writings will have upon the soul of an intelligent reader: and it is some argument, that a thing is the immediate work of God, when it so infinitely transcends all the labours of man. When I look upon Raphael’s picture of our Saviour’s appearing to his Disciples after his resurrection, I cannot but think the just disposition of that piece has in it the force of many volumes on the subject: the Evangelists are easily distinguished from the rest by a passionate zeal and love, which the painter has thrown in their faces: the huddled group of those who stand most distant are admirable representations of men abashed with their late

belief, and hardness of heart. And such endeavours as this of Raphael, and of all men not called to the altar, are collateral helps not to be despised by the ministers of the Gospel. It is with this view, that I presume upon objects of this kind, and men may take up this paper, and be caught by an admonition under the disguise of a diversion.

All the arts and sciences ought to be employed in one confederacy against the prevailing torrent of vice and impiety; and it will be no small step in the progress of religion, if it is as evident as it ought to be, that he wants the best taste and best sense a man can have, who is cold to the 'beauty of holiness.'

As for my part, when I have happened to tend the corpse of a friend to his interment, I have seen a graceful man at the entrance of a church-yard, who became the dignity of his function, and assumed an authority which was natural to truth, pronounce, 'I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.' I say, upon such an occasion, in retrospect upon past actions between the deceased, whom I followed, and myself, together with the many little circumstances that strike upon the soul, and alternately give grief and consolation, have vanished like a dream! I have been relieved as by a voice of

heaven, when the solemnity has proceeded, and after a long pause I have heard the servant of God utter, ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.’ How have I been raised above this world, and all its regards, and how well prepared to receive the next sentence which the holy man has spoken: ‘We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord !’

There are, I know, men of heavy temper, without genius, who can read these expressions of Scripture with as much indifference as they do the rest of these loose papers: however, I will not despair, but to bring men of wit into a love and admiration of the Sacred Writings; and, as old as I am, I promise myself to see the day, when it shall be as much the fashion amongst men of politeness to admire a rapture of St. Paul, as any fine expression in Virgil or Horace; and to see a well-dressed young man produce an Evangelist out of his pocket, and be no more out of countenance, than if it were a classic printed by Elsevir.

It is a gratitude that ought to be paid to

Providence, by men of distinguished faculties, to praise and adore the Author of their Being with a spirit suitable to those faculties, and rouse slower men by their words, actions, and writings, to a participation of their transports and thanksgivings.

SECTION VIII.

AGAINST ATHEISM AND INFIDELITY.

AFTER having treated of false zealots in religion, I cannot forbear mentioning a monstrous species of men, who one would not think had any existence in nature, were they not to be met with in ordinary conversation; I mean the Zealots in Atheism. One would fancy that these men, though they fall short in every other respect, of those who make a professor of religion, would at least outshine them in this particular, and be exempt from that single fault, which seems to grow out of the imprudent fervors of religion: but so it is, that infidelity is propagated with as much fierceness and contention, wrath and indignation, as if the safety of mankind depended upon it. *There is something so ridiculous and perverse in this kind of zealots, that one does not know how to set them out in their proper place.*

Since I have mentioned the
zeal, which appears in Athe-
ists, you must further observe, that they
are most particular manner,
spirit of bigotry. They are
actions full of contradiction
and at the same time look
difficulty in an article of faith,
reason for rejecting it. Not
with the common reason of
conformable to the sense of
nations, not to mention the
promoting the happiness of

the motions and gravitation of matter, with the like particulars, were laid together, and formed into a kind of creed, according to the opinions of the most celebrated Atheists; I say, supposing such a creed as this were formed, and imposed upon any one people in the world, whether it would not require an infinitely greater measure of faith, than any set of articles—which they so violently oppose. Let me therefore advise this generation of wranglers, for their own and for the public good, to act at least so consistently with themselves as not to burn with zeal for irreligion, and with bigotry for nonsense. O.

Cœlum ipsum petimus stultitia—. Hor.

UPON my return to my lodgings last night, I found a letter from my worthy friend the clergyman, whom I have given some account of in my former papers. He tells me in it, that he was particularly pleased with the latter part of my yesterday's speculation; and at the same time enclosed the following essay, which he desires me to publish as the sequel of that discourse. It consists partly of uncommon reflections, and partly of such as have been already used, but now set in a stronger light.

'A believer may be excused by the most

hardened Atheist for endeavouring to make him a convert, because he does it with an eye to both their interests. The Atheist is inexcusable, who tries to gain over a believer, because he does not propose the doing himself or believer any good by such a conversion.

'The prospect of a future state is the secret comfort and refreshment of my soul; it is that which makes nature look gay about me; it doubles all my pleasures, and supports me under all my afflictions. I can look at disappointments and misfortunes, pain and sickness, death itself, and, what is worse than death, the loss of those who are dearest to me, with indifference, so long as I keep in view the pleasures of eternity, and the state of being, in which there will be no fears nor apprehensions, pains nor sorrows, sickness nor separation. Why will any man be so impertinently officious, as to tell me all this is only fancy and delusion? Is there any merit in being the messenger of ill news? If it is a dream, let me enjoy it, since it makes me both the happier and the better man.'

'I must confess I do not know how to trust a man who believes neither heaven nor hell, or, in other words, a future state of rewards and punishments. Not only natural self-love, but reason directs us to promote our own interest above all things. It can never be for *the interest of a believer* to do me a mischief,

because he is sure, upon the balance of accompts, to find himself a loser by it. On the contrary, if he considers his own welfare in his behaviour towards me, it will lead him to do me all the good he can, and, at the same time, restrain him from doing me an injury. An unbeliever does not act like a reasonable creature, if he favours me contrary to his present interest, or does not distress me when it turns to his present advantage. Honour and good-nature may indeed tie up his hands: but as these would be very much strengthened by reason and principle, so without them they are only instincts, or wavering unsettled notions, which rest on no foundation.

‘ Infidelity has been attacked with so good success of late years, that it is driven out of all its outworks. The Atheist has not found his post tenable, and is therefore retired into deism, and a disbelief of revealed religion only. But the truth of it is, the greatest number of this set of men are those, who, for a want of a virtuous education, or examining the grounds of religion, know so very little of the matter in question, that their infidelity is but another term for their ignorance.

‘ As folly and inconsiderateness are the foundations of infidelity, the great pillars and supports of it are either a vanity of appearing wiser than the rest of mankind, or an ostentation of courage in despising the terrors of

another world, which have so great an influence on what they call weaker minds ; or an aversion to a belief, that must cut them off from many of those pleasures they propose to themselves, and fill them with remorse for many of those they have already tasted.

' The great received articles of the Christian religion have been so clearly proved, from the authority of that divine revelation in which they are delivered, that it is impossible for those, who have ears to hear, and eyes to see, not to be convinced of them. But were it possible for any thing in the Christian faith to be erroneous, I can find no ill consequences in adhering to it. The great points of the incarnation and sufferings of our Saviour produce naturally such habits of virtue in the mind of man, that I say, supposing it were possible for us to be mistaken in them, the infidel himself must at least allow, that no other system of religion could so effectually contribute to the heightening of morality. They give us great ideas of the dignity of human nature, and of the love which the Supreme Being bears to his creatures, and consequently engage us in the highest acts of our duty towards our Creator, our neighbour, and ourselves. How many noble arguments has St. Paul raised from the chief articles of our religion, for the advancing of morality in its three great branches ! To give a single example in each kind : What can

be a stronger motive to a firm trust and reliance on the mercies of our Maker, than the giving us his Son to suffer for us? What can make us love and esteem even the most inconsiderable of mankind, more than the thought that Christ died for him? Or what dispose us to set a stricter guard upon the purity of our own hearts, than our being members of Christ, and a part of the society, of which that immaculate Person is the head? But these are only a specimen of those admirable enforcements of morality, which the apostle has drawn from the history of our blessed Saviour.

' If our modern infidels considered these matters with that candour and seriousness which they deserve, we should not see them act with such a spirit of bitterness, arrogance, and malice; they would not be raising such insignificant cavils, doubts, and scruples, as may be started against every thing that is not capable of mathematical demonstration; in order to unsettle the minds of the ignorant, disturb the public peace, subvert morality, and throw all things into confusion and disorder. If none of these reflections can have any influence on them, there is one, that perhaps may, because it is adapted to their vanity, by which they seem to be guided much more than their reason. I would therefore have them consider, that the wisest and best of men, *in all ages of the world*, have been those who



nowned among the heathens
and virtue, in his last me
friends to offer a cock to A
less out of a submissive def
blished worship of his cou
tells us, that his prince, (wh
a pattern of perfection) w
death approaching, offered
mountains to the Persian Ju
“ according to the custom
for those are the words of th
the Epicureans and aton
showed a very remarkable

Qua ratione queas traducere leniter ævum :
Ne te semper inops agitet vexetque cupido ;
Ne pavor, et rerum mediocriter utilium spes.

HOR.

HAVING endeavoured, in my last Saturday's paper, to show the great excellency of faith, I shall here consider what are the proper means of strengthening and confirming it in the mind of man. Those who delight in reading books of controversy, which are written on both sides of the question in point of faith, do very seldom arrive at a fixed and settled habit of it; they are one day entirely convinced of its important truths, and the next meet with something that shakes and disturbs them. The doubt which was laid revives again, and shows itself in new difficulties, and that generally for this reason, because the mind, which is perpetually tossed in controversies and disputes, is apt to forget the reasons, which had once set it at rest, and to be disquieted with any former perplexity, when it appears in a new shape, or is started by a different hand. As nothing is more laudable than an inquiry after truth, so nothing is more irrational than to pass away our whole lives, without determining ourselves one way or other in those points which are of the last importance to us. There are indeed many things, from which we may withhold our assent; but in cases, by which we are to

regulate our lives, it is the greatest absurdity to be wavering and unsettled, without closing with that side, which appears the most safe and the most probable.

The first rule, therefore, which I shall lay down, is this ; that when by reading or discourse we find ourselves thoroughly convinced of the truth of any article, and of the reasonableness of our belief in it, we should never after suffer ourselves to call it into question. We may perhaps forget the arguments which occasioned our conviction, but we ought to remember the strength they had with us, and therefore still to retain the conviction which they once produced. This is no more than what we do in every common art or science ; nor is it possible to act otherwise, considering the weakness and limitation of our intellectual faculties. It was thus that Latimer, one of the glorious army of martyrs, who introduced the reformation in England, behaved himself in that great conference which was managed between the most learned among the Protestants and Papists in the reign of Queen Mary. This venerable old man, knowing how his abilities were impaired by age, and that it was impossible for him to recollect all those reasons which had directed him in the choice of his religion, left his companions, who were in *the full possession* of their parts and learning, *to baffle and confound* their antagonists by the

force of reason. As for himself, he only repeated to his adversaries the articles, in which he firmly believed, and in the profession of which he was determined to die. It is in this manner, that the mathematician proceeds upon propositions which he has once demonstrated; and though the demonstration may have slipt out of his memory, he builds upon the truth, because he knows it was demonstrated. This rule is absolutely necessary for weaker minds, and, in some measure, for men of the greatest abilities.

But to these last I would propose, in the second place, that they should lay up in their memories, and always keep by them in a readiness, those arguments which appear to them of the greatest strength, and which cannot be got over by all the doubts and cavils of infidelity.

But, in the third place, there is nothing which strengthens faith more than morality. Faith and morality naturally produce each other. A man is quickly convinced of the truth of religion, who finds it is not against his interest that it should be true. The pleasure he receives at present, and the happiness which he promises himself from it hereafter, will both dispose him very powerfully to give credit to it, according to the ordinary observation, that 'we are easy to believe what we wish.' It is very certain, that a man of sound

reason cannot forbear closing with religion, upon an impartial examination of it: but, at the same time, it is as certain, that faith is kept alive in us, and gathers strength from practice more than from speculation.

There is still another method, which is more persuasive than any of the former, and that is an habitual adoration of the Supreme Being, as well in constant acts of mental worship, as in outward forms. The devout man does not only believe, but feels there is a Deity. He has actual sensations of him; his experience concurs with his reason; he sees him more and more in all his intercourses with him, and even in this life almost loses his faith in conviction.

The last method, which I shall mention for the giving life to a man's faith, is frequent retirement from the world, accompanied with religious meditation. When a man thinks of any thing in the darkness of the night, whatever deep impressions it may make in his mind, they are apt to vanish as soon as the day breaks about him. The light and noise of the day, which are perpetually soliciting his senses, and calling off his attention, wear out of his mind the thoughts that imprinted themselves in it, with so much strength, during the silence and darkness of the night. A man finds the *same difference* as to himself in a crowd and in a solitude: the mind is stunned and

dazzled amidst that variety of objects which press upon her in a great city: she cannot apply herself to the consideration of those things, which are of the utmost concern to her. The cares or pleasures of the world strive in with every thought, and a multitude of vicious examples give a kind of justification to our folly. In our retirements every thing disposes us to be serious. In courts and cities we are entertained with the works of men; in the country with those of God. One is the province of art, the other of nature. Faith and devotion naturally grow in the mind of every reasonable man, who sees the impressions of divine power and wisdom in every object, on which he casts his eye. The Supreme Being has made the best arguments for his own existence, in the formation of the heavens and the earth; and these are arguments, which a man of sense cannot forbear attending to, who is out of the noise and hurry of human affairs. Aristotle says, that should a man live under ground, and there converse with works of art and mechanism, and should afterwards be brought up into the open day, and see the several glories of the heaven and earth, he would immediately pronounce them the works of such a Being as we define God to be. The Psalmist has very beautiful strokes of poetry to this purpose, in that exalted strain, 'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his.

handy-work. One day telleth another; and one night certifieth another. There is neither speech nor language: but their voices are heard among them. Their sound is gone out into all lands; and their words into the ends of the world.' As such a bold and sublime manner of thinking furnishes very noble matter for an ode, the reader may see it wrought into the following one.

I.

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heav'ns, a shining frame,
Their great original proclaim :
Th' unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.

II.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the listening earth
Repeats the story of her birth :
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

III.

What though, in solemn silence, all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball ;
What though nor real voice nor sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found ;
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing as they shine,
'The Hand that made us is Divine.'

C.

SECTION IX.

AGAINST THE MODERN FREETHINKERS.

SIR,

'THERE arrived in this neighbourhood two days ago one of your gay gentlemen of the town, who being attended at his entry with a servant of his own, besides a countryman he had taken up for a guide, excited the curiosity of the village to learn whence and what he might be. The countryman (to whom they applied as the most easy of access) knew little more than that the gentleman came from London to travel and see fashions, and was, as he heard say, a Freethinker : what religion that might be, he could not tell ; and for his own part, if they had not told him the man was a Freethinker, he should have guessed, by his way of talking, he was little better than a heathen ; excepting only that he had been a good gentleman to him, and made him drunk twice in one day, over and above what they had bargained for.

' I do not look upon the simplicity of this, and several odd inquiries, with which I shall trouble you, to be wondered at ; much less can I think that our youths of fine wit, and enlarged understandings, have any reason to laugh. There is no necessity that every

squire in Great Britain should know what the word Freethinker stands for : but it were much to be wished, that they, who valued themselves upon that conceited title, were a little better instructed in what it ought to stand for ; and that they would not persuade themselves a man is really and truly a Freethinker in any tolerable sense, merely by virtue of his being an Atheist, or an Infidel of any other distinction. It may be doubted with good reason, whether there ever was in nature a more abject, slavish, and bigoted generation than the tribe of *Beaux Esprits*, at present so prevailing in this island. Their pretension to be Freethinkers is no other than rakes have to be free-livers, and savages to be free-men ; that is, they can think whatever they have a mind to, and give themselves up to whatever conceit the extravagancy of their inclination, or their fancy, shall suggest ; they can think as wildly as talk and act, and will not endure that their wit should be controlled by such formal things as decency and common sense : deduction, coherence, consistency, and all the rules of reason, they accordingly disdain, as too precise and mechanical for men of a liberal education.

This, as far as I could ever learn from their writings, or my own observation, is a true account of the British Freethinker. Our visitant here, who gave occasion to this paper, has

brought with him a new system of common sense, the particulars of which I am not yet acquainted with, but will lose no opportunity of informing myself whether it contain any thing worth Mr. Spectator's notice. In the mean time, Sir, I cannot but think it would be for the good of mankind, if you would take this subject into your own consideration, and convince the hopeful youth of our nation, that licentiousness is not freedom ; or, if such a paradox will not be understood, that a prejudice towards Atheism is not impartiality.'

I am, Sir, your most humble Servant,
T.

PHILONÆUS.

Quicquid est illud, quod sentit, quod sapit, quod vult,
quod viget, cœleste et divinum est, ob eamque
rem æternum sit necesse est. TULL.

I AM diverted from the account I was giving the town of my particular concerns, by casting my eye upon a treatise, which I could not overlook without an inexcusable negligence, and want of concern for all the civil as well as religious interests of mankind. This piece has for its title, 'A Discourse of Freethinking, occasioned by the Rise and Growth of a Sect called Freethinkers.' The author very methodically enters upon his argument, and says, '*By freethinking, I mean the use of the understanding, in endeavouring to find out the*



thing before he had consider'd all title to the character of : the most apparent prejudic'd men, whom of all other a g most careful not to violate holy orders. Persons, who l selves to the service of Go all who fear him ; and it i teristic of a dissolute and u rail and speak disrespectful' neral. It is certain, that i of men some will intrude, v very unbecoming their fun

their credit, and frustrate their labours. Whatever clergymen, in disputes against each other, have unguardedly uttered, is here recorded in such a manner as to affect religion itself, by wresting concessions to its disadvantage from its own teachers. If this be a truth, as sure any man that reads the discourse must allow it is ; and if religion is the strongest tie of human society ; in what manner are we to treat this our common enemy, who promotes the growth of such a sect as he calls Freethinkers? He that should burn a house, and justify the action by asserting he is a free agent, would be more excusable than this author in uttering what he has from the right of a Freethinker. But they are a set of dry, joyless, dull fellows, who want capacities and talents to make a figure amongst mankind upon benevolent and generous principles, that think to surmount their own natural meanness, by laying offences in the way of such as make it their endeavour to excel upon the received maxims and honest arts of life. If it were possible to laugh at so melancholy an affair as what hazards salvation, it would be no unpleasant inquiry to ask, what satisfaction they reap, what extraordinary gratification of sense, or what delicious libertinism this sect of Freethinkers enjoy, after getting loose of the laws, which confine the passions of other men? Would it not be a matter of mirth to find,

of the age are kept safe from dabbling in their rhapsodies, the pleasures, for which their them unaccountable. Thus do only to gratify a dry pride of the interests of another world larding their gratifications in certain that there are a sort of puzzle truth, but cannot enjoy of it. This same Freethinker is acquainted with the emotions great minds when they are turn and it is apparent, that he is u

is as capable of writing an heroic poem, as inaking a fervent prayer. When men are thus low and narrow in their apprehensions of things, and at the same time vain, they are naturally led to think every thing they do not understand, not to be understood. Their contradiction to what is urged by others is a necessary consequence of their incapacity to receive it. The atheistical fellows who appeared the last age did not serve the devil for nougnt ; but revelled in excesses suitable to their principles ; while in these unhappy days mischief is done for mischief's sake. These Freethinkers, who lead the lives of recluse students, for no other purpose but to disturb the sentiments of other men, put me in mind of the monstrous recreation of those late wild youths, who, without provocation, had a wantonness in stabbing and defacing those they met with. When such writers as this, who has no spirit but that malice, pretend to inform the age, Mohocks and Cut-throats may well set up for wits and men of pleasure.

It will be perhaps expected, that I should produce some instances of the ill intention of the Freethinker, to support the treatment I give him. In his 52d page he says, 'Idly, The priests throughout the world talk about Scriptures, and the authority of the same. The Bramins have a book of law, called the Shaster. The Persians

have ...
have books written
whom they call the God and
world, who was born to teach the way
vation, and to give satisfaction for all
sins. The Talapoans of Siam have a
Scripture written by Sommonocodon
the Siamese say, was born of a vir-
was the God expected by the univer-
Dervizes have their Alcoran.'

I believe there is no one will d
author's great impartiality in setting
accounts of these different religio-
think it is pretty evident he deliv-
ter with an air, that betrays the b
born of a virgin has as much a
from St. Sommonocodom - he treats Rev

possible interpretation to give this work, but a design to subvert and ridicule the authority of Scripture. The peace and tranquillity of the nation, and regards even above those, are so much concerned in this matter, that it is difficult to express sufficient sorrow for the offender, or indignation against him. But if ever man deserved to be denied the common benefits of air and water, it is the author of a discourse of Freethinking.

—Mentisque capacious altæ.

OVID.

As I was, the other day, taking a solitary walk in St. Paul's, I indulged my thoughts in the pursuit of a certain analogy between the fabric and the Christian church in the largest sense. The divine order and economy of the one seemed to be emblematically set forth by the just, plain, and majestic architecture of the other. And as the one consists of a great variety of parts united in the same regular design, according to the truest art, and most exact proportion; so the other contains a decent subordination of members, various sacred institutions, sublime doctrines, and solid precepts of morality digested into the same design, and with an admirable concurrence tending to one view, the happiness and exaltation of human nature.

In the midst of my contemplation, I beheld

a fly upon one of the pillars ; and it straight-way came into my head, that this same fly was a Freethinker. For it required some comprehension in the eye of the spectator to take in at one view the various parts of the building, in order to observe their symmetry and design. But to the fly, whose prospect was confined to a little part of one of the stones of a single pillar, the joint beauty of the whole, or the distinct use of its parts, were inconspicuous, and nothing could appear but small inequalities in the surface of the hewn stone, which in the view of that insect seemed so many deformed rocks and precipices.

The thoughts of a Freethinker are employed on certain minute particularities of religion, the difficulty of a single text, or the unaccountableness of some step of Providence or point of doctrine to his narrow faculties, without comprehending the scope and design of Christianity, the perfection to which it raiseth human nature, the light it hath shed abroad in the world, and the close connexion it hath, as well with the good of public societies, as with that of particular persons.

This raised in me some reflections on that frame or disposition which is called largeness of mind, its necessity towards forming a true judgment of things, and where the soul is not *incurably stunted by nature*, what are the *likeliest methods to give it enlargement*.

It is evident that philosophy doth open and

enlarge the mind, by the general views to which men are habituated in that study, and by the contemplation of more numerous and distant objects than fall within the sphere of mankind in the ordinary pursuits of life. Hence it comes to pass, that philosophers judge of most things very differently from the vulgar. Some instances of this may be seen in the *Theætetus* of Plato, where Socrates makes the following remarks among others of the like nature.

‘ When a philosopher hears ten thousand acres mentioned as a great estate, he looks upon it as an inconsiderable spot, having been used to contemplate the whole globe of earth. Or when he beholds a man elated with the nobility of his race, because he can reckon a series of seven rich ancestors, the philosopher thinks him a stupid ignorant fellow, whose mind cannot reach to a general view of human nature, which would show him that we have all innumerable ancestors, among whom are crowds of rich and poor, kings and slaves, Greeks and barbarians.’ Thus far Socrates, who was accounted wiser than the rest of the heathens, for notions which approach the nearest to Christianity.

As all parts and branches of philosophy, or speculative knowledge, are useful in that respect, astronomy is peculiarly adapted to remedy a little and narrow spirit. In that



years. These lucas would
expand the mind. There
immensity of this distance
overwhelms the imagination
the grasp of the human intellect
vinces, and kingdoms vanish.
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the human soul, are displayed in the largest characters. The mind of man seems to adapt itself to the different nature of its objects; it is contracted and debased by being conversant in little and low things, and feels a proportionable enlargement arising from the contemplation of these great and sublime ideas.

The greatness of things is comparative: and this does not only hold in respect of extension, but likewise in respect of dignity, duration, and all kinds of perfection. Astronomy opens the mind, and alters our judgment with regard to the magnitude of extended beings: but Christianity produceth an universal greatness of soul. Philosophy increaseth our views in every respect; but Christianity extends them to a degree beyond the light of nature.

How mean must the most exalted potentate upon earth appear to that eye which takes in innumerable orders of blessed Spirits, differing in glory and perfection! How little must the amusements of sense, and the ordinary occupations of mortal men, seem to one who is engaged in so noble a pursuit, as the assimilation of himself to the Deity, which is the proper employment of every Christian!

And the improvement, which grows from habituating the mind to the comprehensive views of religion, must not be thought wholly to regard the understanding. Nothing is of greater force to subdue the inordinate motions

of the heart, and to regulate the will. Whether a man be actuated by his passions, or his reason, these are first wrought upon by some object, which stirs the soul in proportion to its apparent dimensions. Hence irreligious men, whose short prospects are filled with earth, and sense, and mortal life, are invited, by these mean ideas, to actions proportionably little and low. But a mind, whose views are enlightened and extended by religion, is animated to nobler pursuits by more sublime and remote objects.

There is not any instance of weakness in the Freethinkers, that raises my indignation more, than their pretending to ridicule the Christians as men of narrow understandings, and to pass themselves upon the world for persons of superior sense, and more enlarged views. But I leave it to any impartial man to judge which hath the nobler sentiments, which the greater views ; he whose notions are stinted to a few miserable inlets of sense, or he whose sentiments are raised above the common taste by the anticipation of those delights which will satiate the soul, when the whole capacity of her nature is branched out into new faculties ? he who looks for nothing beyond this short span of duration, or he whose aims are coextended with the endless length of eternity ? he who derives his spirit from the elements, or he who thinks it was inspired by the Almighty ?

‘Sir,

‘SINCE you have not refused to insert matters of a theological nature in those excellent papers, with which you daily both instruct and divert us, I earnestly desire you to print the following paper. The notions therein advanced are, for aught I know, new to the English reader, and, if they are true, will afford room for many useful inferences.

‘No man that reads the Evangelists, but must observe that our blessed Saviour does upon every occasion bend all his force and zeal to rebuke and correct the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. Upon that subject he shows a warmth, which one meets with in no other part of his sermons. They are so enraged at the public detection of their secret villainies, by one who saw through all their disguises, that they joined in the prosecution of him, which was so vigorous, that Pilate at last consented to his death. The frequency and vehemence of these reprehensions of our Lord have made the word Pharisee to be looked upon as odious among Christians, and to mean only one who lays the utmost stress upon the outward, ceremonial, and ritual part of his religion, without having such an inward sense of it, as would lead him to a general and sincere observance of those duties, which can only arise from the heart, and which cannot

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what the Apostles did a
salem upon their first
commission, and also of
after he was consecrated to
his journey to Rome, the
opposition to Christianity
but several signal occasions
assisted its first teachers.
Church was in its infant
lous and hearty persecut
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truly call the Freethink

any other part of the Old Testament. These men therefore justly dreaded the spreading of Christianity after the ascension of our Lord, because it was wholly founded upon his resurrection.

' Accordingly therefore when Peter and John had cured the lame man at the beautiful gate of the Temple, and had thereby raised a wonderful expectation of themselves among the people, the priests and Sadducees, (Acts iv.) clapped them up, and sent them away for the first time with a severe reprimand. Quickly after, when the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, and the many miracles wrought after those severe instances of the apostolical power, had alarmed the priests, who looked upon the temple-worship, and consequently their bread, to be struck at, these priests, and all they that were with them, who were of the sect of the Sadducees, imprisoned the Apostles, intending to examine them in the great council the next day. Where, when the council met, and the priests and Sadducees proposed to proceed with great rigour against them, we find that Gamaliel, a very eminent Pharisee, St. Paul's master, a man of great authority among the people, many of whose determinations we have still preserved in the body of the Jewish traditions, commonly called the Talmud, opposed their heat, and told them, for aught they knew the ap-

party, as well as his own. tyrdom came on presently do not find the Pharisees hand ; it is probable that by those who had before in John. One novice indeed zealous that he kept the c stoned him. This novic beyond all bounds, was who was peculiarly honou heaven, by which he was was afterwards, by God I he the Apostle of the Gentil

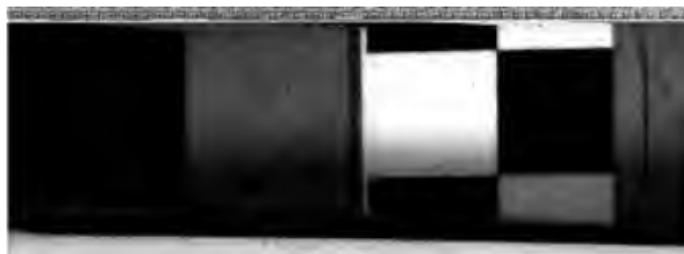
the strictest manner, in the law of his fathers. In the twenty-third chapter he told the council, that he was a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, and that he was accused for asserting the hope and resurrection of the dead, which was their darling doctrine. Hereupon the Pharisees stood by him, and though they did not own our Saviour to be the Messiah, yet they would not deny but some angel or spirit might have spoken to him, and then, if they opposed him, they should fight against God. This was the very argument Gamaliel had used before. The resurrection of our Lord, which they saw so strenuously asserted by the Apostles, whose miracles they also saw and owned, (Acts iv. 16.) seems to have struck them, and many of them were converted (Acts xv. 5.) even without a miracle, and the rest stood still, and made no opposition.

'We see here what the part was, which the Pharisees acted in this important conjuncture. Of the Sadducees, we meet not with one in the whole apostolic history, that was converted. We hear of no miracles wrought to convince any of them, though there was an eminent one wrought to reclaim a Pharisee. St. Paul, we see, after his conversion, always gloried in his having been bred a Pharisee. He did so to the people of Jerusalem, to the great council, to King Agrippa, and to the Philippians. So that from hence we may justly

infer; that it was not their institution, which was in itself laudable, which our blessed Saviour found fault with, but it was their hypocrisy, their covetousness, their oppression, their overvaluing themselves upon their zeal for the ceremonial Law, and their adding to that yoke by their traditions, all which were not properly essentials of their institution, that our Lord blamed.

‘ But I must not run on. What I would observe, sir, is, that Atheism is more dreadful, and would be more grievous to human society, if it were invested with sufficient power, than religion under any shape, where its professors do at the bottom believe what they profess. I despair not of a Papist’s conversion, though I would not willingly lie at a zealot Papist’s mercy; and no Protestant would, if he knew what Popery is, though he truly believes in our Saviour. But the Freethinker, who scarcely believes there is a God, and certainly disbelieves Revelation, is a very terrible animal. He will talk of natural rights, and the just freedoms of mankind, no longer than till he himself gets into power; and, by the instance before us, we have small grounds to hope for his salvation, or that God will ever vouchsafe him sufficient grace to reclaim him from errors, which have been so immediately levelled against himself.

‘ If these notions be true, as I verily believe



FREETHINKERS.

they are, I thought they might be worth publishing at this time, for which reason they sent in this manner to you by,

‘Sir, your most humble servant,
‘M. N

SECTION X.

IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL, AND FUTURE STATE.

Nescio quomodo inheret in mentibus quasi solum quoddam augurium futurorum: idqu maximis ingenii altissimisque animis ex maxime et appetit facillime.

Cic. Tusc. Quæs

TO THE SPECTATOR.

‘SIR,

‘I AM fully persuaded that one of the springs of generous and worthy actions the having generous and worthy thought ourselves. Whoever has a mean opinion the dignity of his nature, will act in no higher rank than he has allotted himself in his estimation. If he considers his being as circumscribed by the uncertain term of a few years, his designs will be contracted into same narrow span he imagines is to bound existence. How can he exalt his thoughts any thing great and noble, who only regards that after a short turn on the stage

quently reviving its own g
endowments ; nor a more
awaken in us an ambition
objects and little pursuits,
selves as heirs of eternity.

.. ‘ It is a very great satire
the best and wisest of man
and ages, asserting, as w
their birth-right, and to fit
express revelation. At the
turn our thoughts inward
may meet with a kind o
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are complaining, as you observe in a former speculation, of the shortness of life, and yet are perpetually hurrying over the arts of it, to arrive at certain little settlements, or imaginary points of rest, which are dispersed up and down in it.

' Now let us consider what happens to us when we arrive at those imaginary points of rest: do we stop our motion, and sit down satisfied in the settlement we have gained? or are we not removing the boundary, and marking out new points of rest, to which we press forward with the like eagerness, and which cease to be such as fast as we attain them? Our case is like that of a traveller upon the Alps, who should fancy that the top of the next hill must end his journey, because it terminates his prospect: but he no sooner arrives at it, than he sees new ground and other hills beyond it, and continues to travel on as before.

' This is so plainly every man's condition in life, that there is no one, who has observed any thing, but may observe, that as fast as his time wears away, his appetite to something future remains. The use therefore I would make of it is this: that since nature (as some love to express it) does nothing in vain, or, to speak properly, since the Author of our being has planted no wandering passion in it, no desire which has not its object, f

rity is the proper object of the passion so constantly exercised about it; and this restlessness in the present, this assigning ourselves over to farther stages of duration, this successive grasping at somewhat still to come, appears to me (whatever it may to others) as a kind of instinct, or natural symptom, which the mind of man has of its own immortality.

' I take it at the same time for granted, that the immortality of the soul is sufficiently established by other arguments: and if so, this appetite, which otherwise would be very unaccountable and absurd, seems very reasonable, and adds strength, to the conclusion. But I am amazed when I consider there are creatures capable of thought, who, in spite of every argument, can form to themselves a sullen satisfaction in thinking otherwise. There is something so pitifully mean in the inverted ambition of that man who can hope for annihilation, and please himself to think that his whole fabric shall one day crumble into dust, and mix with the mass of inanimate beings, that it equally deserves our admiration and pity. The mystery of such men's unbelief is not hard to be penetrated; and indeed amounts to nothing more than a sordid hope, that they shall not be immortal, because they dare not be so.

' This brings me back to my first observation, and gives me occasion to say further,

That as worthy actions spring from worthy thoughts, so worthy thoughts are likewise the consequence of worthy actions: but the wretch, who has degraded himself below the character of immortality, is very willing to resign his pretensions to it, and to substitute in its room a dark negative happiness in the extinction of his being.

The admirable Shakspeare has given us a strong image of the unsupported condition of such a person in his last minutes, in the second part of King Henry the Sixth, where Cardinal Beaufort, who had been concerned in the murder of the good Duke Humphrey, is represented on his death bed. After some short confused speeches, which show an imagination disturbed with guilt, just as he is expiring, King Henry, standing by him full of compassion, says,

“ Lord Cardinal! if thou think’st on heaven’s bliss,
Hold up thy hand, make signal of that hope!—
He dies, and makes no sign!”

‘ The despair, which is here shown, without a word or action on the part of the dying person, is beyond what could be painted by the most forcible expressions whatever.

‘ I shall not pursue this thought further, but only add, that as annihilation is not to be had with a wish, so it is the most abject thing in the world to wish it. What are honour, fame, wealth, or power, when compared with the

generous expectation of a being without end,
and a happiness adequate to that being?

‘ I am, sir,

‘ Your most obedient humble servant,

Z.

‘ T. D.’

Ἐπειδὴν οὐδὲ τὰς σοφὰς ἔχειν βλέπειν.

EURIPID.

THE time present seldom affords sufficient employment to the mind of man. Objects of pain or pleasure, love or admiration, do not lie thick enough together in life, to keep the soul in constant action, and supply an immediate exercise of his faculties. In order, therefore, to remedy this defect, that the mind may not want business, but always have materials for thinking, she is endowed with certain powers, that can recall what is past, and anticipate what is to come.

That wonderful faculty, which we call the memory, is perpetually looking back, when we have nothing present to entertain us. It is like those repositories in several animals, that are filled with the stores of their former food, on which they may ruminate when their present pasture fails.

As the memory relieves the mind in her vacant moments, and prevents any chasms of thought by ideas of what is past, we have other faculties, that agitate and employ her

upon what is to come. These are the passions of hope and fear.

By these two passions we reach forward into futurity, and bring up to our present thoughts objects that lie hid in the remotest depths of time. We suffer misery, and enjoy happiness, before they are in being ; we can set the sun and stars forward, or lose sight of them by wandering into those retired parts of eternity, when the heavens and earth shall be no more.

By the way ; who can imagine that the existence of a creature is to be circumscribed by time, whose thoughts are not ? But I shall, in this paper, confine myself to that particular passion, which goes by the name of Hope.

Our actual enjoyments are so few and transient, that man would be a very miserable being, were he not endowed with this passion, which gives him a taste of those good things, that may possibly come into his possession. 'We should hope for every thing that is good,' says the old poet Linus, 'because there is nothing which may not be hoped for, and nothing but what the gods are able to give us.' Hope quickens all the still parts of life, and keeps the mind awake in her most remiss and indolent hours. It gives habitual serenity and good humour. It is a kind of vital heat in the soul, that cheers and gladdens her, when she does not attend to it. It makes pain easy, and labour pleasant.

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and turned all his thoughts
more valuable that he had i
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from this story, and apply it
out my direction.

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fall of man) shows us how

close to the lid of it, that it was shut down upon her.

I shall make but two reflections upon what I have hitherto said. First, that no kind of life is so happy as that which is full of Hope especially when the Hope is well grounded and when the object of it is of an exalted kind, and in its nature proper to make the person happy who enjoys it. This proposition must be very evident to those who consider how few are the present enjoyments of the most happy man, and how insufficient to give him an entire satisfaction and acquiescence in them.

My next observation is this, That a religious life is that which most abounds in well-grounded Hope, and such an one as is fixed on objects that are capable of making us entirely happy. This Hope in a religious man is much more sure and certain than the hope of any temporal blessing, as it is strengthened not only by reason but by faith. It has at the same time its eye perpetually fixed on that state, which implies in the very notion of it the most full and the most complete happiness.

I have before shown how the influence of Hope in general sweetens life, and makes our present condition supportable, if not pleasing but a religious hope has still greater advantages. It does not only bear up the

under her sufferings, but makes her rejoice in them, as they may be the instruments of procuring her the great and ultimate end of all her hope.

Religious hope has likewise this advantage above any other kind of hope, that it is able to revive the dying man, and to fill his mind not only with secret comfort and refreshment, but sometimes with rapture and transport. He triumphs in his agonies, whilst the soul springs forward with delight to the great object which he has always had in view, and leaves the body with an expectation of being reunited to her in a glorious and joyful resurrection.

I shall conclude this essay with those emphatical expressions of a lively hope, which the Psalmist made use of in the midst of those dangers and adversities which surrounded him; for the following passage had its present and personal, as well as its future and prophetic sense. ‘I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.’ C.

Tū μὲν γὰρ γίνος ἐμέν.

TO THE SPECTATOR.

‘SIR,

‘IT has been usual to remind persons of rank, on great occasions in life, of their race and quality, and to what expectations they were born ; that, by considering what is worthy of them, they may be withdrawn from mean pursuits, and encouraged to laudable undertakings. This is turning nobility into a principle of virtue, and making it productive of merit, as it is understood to have been originally a reward of it.

‘It is for the like reason, I imagine, that you have in some of your speculations asserted to your readers the dignity of human nature. But you cannot be insensible that this is a controverted doctrine : there are authors, who consider human nature in a very different view, and books of maxims have been written to show the falsity of all human virtues. The reflections, which are made on this subject, usually take some tincture from the tempers and characters of those that make them. Politicians can resolve the most shining actions among men into artifice and design : others, who are soured by discontent, repulses, or ill usage, are apt to mistake their spleen for philosophy : men of profligate lives, and such as find themselves incapable of rising to any

Q



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monster.

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‘ It is true indeed th
mixtures of beauty and
and folly, virtue and vi

natural philosophy, in which the arguments on both sides seem to be of equal strength. But as I began with considering this point as it relates to action, I shall here borrow an admirable reflection from Monsieur Paseal, which I think sets it in its proper light.

" " It is of dangerous consequence, says he, to represent to man how near he is to the level of beasts, without showing at the same time his greatness. It is likewise dangerous to let him see his greatness without his meanness. It is more dangerous yet to leave him ignorant of either ; but very beneficial that he should be made sensible of both." Whatever imperfections we may have in our nature, it is the business of religion and virtue to rectify them, as far as is consistent with our present state. In the mean time, it is no small encouragement to generous minds to consider that we shall put them all off with our mortality. That sublime manner of salutation with which the Jews approached their kings,

" O king, live for ever !"

may be addressed to the lowest and most despised mortal among us, under all the infirmities and distresses, with which we see him surrounded. And whoever believes the immortality of the soul, will not need a better argument for the dignity of his nature, nor stronger incitement to actions suitable to it.

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and Scipio and Lælius as his audi
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Soul's Immortality, agreeable b
and the Christian doctrine, I bel
ders will not be displeas'd to see
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that when I depart from you I shall be no more ; but remember, that my soul, even while I lived among you, was invisible to you ; yet by my actions you were sensible it existed in this body. Believe it therefore existing still, though it be still unseen. How quickly would the honours of illustrious men perish after death, if their souls performed nothing to preserve their fame ! For my own part, I could never think that the soul, while in a mortal body, lives ; but when departed out of it, dies ; or that its consciousness is lost when it is discharged out of an unconscious habitation. But when it is freed from all corporeal alliance, then it truly exists. Further, since the human frame is broken by death, tell us what becomes of its parts ? It is visible whither the materials of other beings are translated, namely, to the source from whence they had their birth. The soul alone neither present nor departed is the object of our eyes."

‘ Thus Cyrus. “ But to proceed. No one shall persuade me, Scipio, that your worthy father, or your grandfathers Paulus and Africarus, or Africarus his father, or uncle, or many other excellent men, whom I need not name, performed so many actions to be remembered by posterity, without being sensible that futurity was their right. And, if I may be allowed an old man’s privilege, to speak of myself, do you think I would have

not how, my soul has always looked forward on futurity, in expectation, that when it shall have life, it shall then live for ever. If these were not true, that the minds of souls of the most worthy would others, have the strongest imp

"What besides this is the wisest men die with the greatest ignorance? The ignorant with the greater it not seem that those minds which have the most extensive views, from moving to a happier condition of a narrower sight do not my part, am transported by ancestors, who

of exalted spirits! when I shall go not only to those great persons I have named, but to my Cato, my son, than whom a better man was never born, and whose funeral rites I myself performed, whereas he ought rather to have attended mine. Yet has not his soul deserted me, but, seeming to cast back a look on me, is gone before to those habitations, to which it was sensible I should follow him. And though I might appear to have borne my loss with courage, I was not unaffected with it; but I comforted myself in the assurance, that it would not be long before we should meet again, and be divorced no more."

'I am, sir, &c.'

—Nec morti esse locum.—

Vinc.

A LEWD young fellow seeing an aged hermit go by him barefoot, 'Father,' says he, 'you are in a very miserable condition if there is not another world.' 'True, son,' said the hermit; 'but what is thy condition if there is?' Man is a creature designed for two different states of being, or rather for two different lives. His first life is short and transient; his second permanent and lasting. The question we are all concerned in is this; In which of these two lives is it our chief interest to make ourselves happy? Or, in other words,

of a life which is ~~never~~ ~~ever~~ ~~ever~~
never end? Every man, upon the
of this question, knows very well w
it he ought to close with. But, ho
we are in theory, it is plain that
we adhere to the wrong side of t
We make provisions for this life
were never to have an end, and fort
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Should a spirit of superior rar
stranger to human nature, accide
upon the earth, and take a survey
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Would not he think that we are
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uses than what we really are?

is. . And truly, according to such an imagination, he must conclude that we are a species of the most obedient creatures in the universe; that we are constant to our duty, and that we keep a steady eye on the end, for which we were sent hither.

But how great would be his astonishment, when he learnt that we were beings not designed to exist in this world above threescore and ten years? and that the greatest part of this busy species fall short even of that age? How would he be lost in horror and admiration, when he should know that this set of creatures, who lay out all their endeavours for this life, which scarce deserves the name of existence, when, I say, he should know that this set of creatures are to exist to all eternity in another life, for which they make no preparations? Nothing can be a greater disgrace to reason, than that men, who are persuaded of these two different states of being, should be perpetually employed in providing for a life of threescore and ten years, and neglecting to make provision for that, which, after many myriads of years, will be still new, and still beginning; especially when we consider that our endeavours for making ourselves great, or rich, or honourable, or whatever else we place *our happiness in*, may, after all, prove unsuccessful; whereas if we constantly and sincerely endeavour to make ourselves happy

the other life, we are sure that our endeavours will succeed, and that we shall not be disappointed of our hope.

The following question is started by one of the schoolmen. Supposing the whole body of the earth were a great ball or mass of the finest sand, and that a single grain or particle of this sand should be annihilated every thousand years. Supposing then that you had it in your choice to be happy all the while this prodigious mass of sand was consuming by this slow method, till there was not a grain of it left, on condition you were to be miserable for ever after; or supposing that you might be happy for ever after, on condition you would be miserable till the whole mass of sand was thus annihilated at the rate of one grain in a thousand years: which of these two cases would you make your choice?

It must be confessed in this case, so many thousands of years are to the imagination as a kind of eternity, though in reality they do not bear so great a proportion to that duration which is to follow them, as an unit does to the greatest number which you can put together in figures, or as one of those sands to the supposed heap. Reason therefore tells us, without any manner of hesitation, which would be the better part of this choice. However, as I have before intimated, our reason might, in such a case, be so overset by

imagination, as to dispose some persons to sink under the consideration of the great length of the first part of this duration, and of the great distance of that second duration which is to succeed it. The mind, I say, might give itself up to that happiness which is at hand, considering that it is so very near, and that it would last so very long. But when the choice we actually have before us is this, Whether we will choose to be happy for the space only of threescore and ten, nay perhaps of only twenty or ten years, I might say of only a day or an hour, and miserable to all eternity ; or, on the contrary, miserable for this short term of years, and happy for a whole eternity : what words are sufficient to express that folly and want of consideration which in such a case makes a wrong choice ?

I here put the case even at the worst, by supposing (what seldom happens) that a course of virtue makes us miserable in this life : but if we suppose (as it generally happens) that virtue would make us more happy even in this life than a contrary course of vice ; how can we sufficiently admire the stupidity or madness of those persons who are capable of making so absurd a choice ?

Every wise man therefore will consider the life only as it may conduce to the happiness of the other, and cheerfully sacrifice the pleasures of a few years to those of an eternal

please me more than those upon
and Eternity. You have already
that part of eternity with is past, a
you would give us your thoughts
which is to come.

‘ Your readers will perhaps receive
pleasure from this view of Eternity,
former, since we have, every one of
cern in that which is to come :
speculation on that which is past
curious than useful.

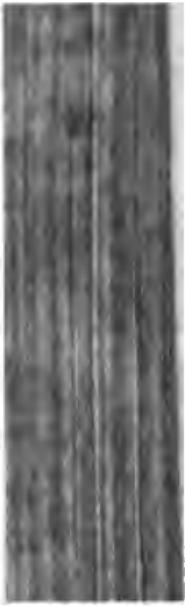
‘ Besides, we can easily conceive
for successive duration never to have
though, as you have justly observed,
Eternity which never had a beginning,
~~another incomprehensible~~ : that is, ’

hath faculties improvable to all Eternity ; and, by a proper or wrong employment of them, may be happy or miserable throughout that infinite duration. Our idea indeed of this Eternity is not of an adequate or fixed nature, but is perpetually growing and enlarging itself toward the object, which is too big for human comprehension.. As we are now in the beginning of existence, so shall we always appear to ourselves as if we were for ever entering upon it. After a million or two of centuries, some considerable things already past may slip out of our memory ; which, if it be not strengthened in a wonderful manner, may possibly forget that there ever was a sun or planets. And yet, notwithstanding the long race that we shall then have run, we shall still imagine ourselves just starting from the goal; and find no proportion between that space which we know had a beginning, and what we are sure will never have an end.'

Sentio te sedem hominum ac domum contemplari,
que si tibi parva (ut est) ita videtur, haec coelestia
semper spectato ; illa humana contemnito.

CICERO SOMN. SCIR.

THE following essay comes from the ingenious author of the letter upon Novelty, printed in a late Spectator : the notions are drawn from the Platonic way of thinking ; but as the



great mind, who would con-
regard to himself in pro-
not to make trial of his
informed what effects w-
the world, as existing in
then as beautiful as now
being; and in the imm-
sence are contained far
will be ever set forth to
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tions of his Almighty Wi-
infinite there is an unme-
to be filled up in endl-

doth not fall within my present view, I shall content myself with taking notice, that the consideration now mentioned proves undeniably, that the ideal worlds in the Divine Understanding yield a prospect incomparably more ample, various, and delightful, than any created world can do: and that therefore, as it is not to be supposed, that God should make a world merely of inanimate matter, however diversified, or inhabited only by creatures of no higher an order than brutes; so the end, for which he designed his reasonable offspring, is the contemplation of his works, the enjoyment of himself, and in both to be happy, having to this purpose endowed them with correspondent faculties and desires. He can have no greater pleasure from a bare review of his works, than from the survey of his own ideas: but we may be assured, that he is well pleased in the satisfaction derived to beings capable of it, and for whose entertainment he hath erected this immense theatre. Is not this more than an intimation of our immortality? Man, who when considered as on his probation for a happy existence hereafter, is the most remarkable instance of Divine Wisdom; if we cut him off from all relation to eternity, is the most wonderful and unaccountable composition in the whole creation. He hath capacities to lodge a much greater variety of knowledge than he will b

ever master of, and an unsatisfied curiosity to tread the secret paths of nature and Providence: but, with this, his organs, in their present structure, are rather fitted to serve the necessities of a vile body, than to minister to his understanding; and from the little spot to which he is chained, he can frame but wandering guesses concerning the innumerable worlds of light that encompass him, which, though in themselves of a prodigious bigness, do but just glimmer in the remote parts of the heavens; and when with a great deal of time and pains he hath laboured a little way up the steep ascent of truth, and beholds with pity the grovelling multitude beneath, in a moment his foot slides, and he tumbles down headlong into the grave.

Thinking on this, I am obliged to believe, in justice to the Creator of the world, that there is another state, where man shall be better situated for contemplation, or rather have it in his power to remove from object to object, and from world to world; and be accommodated with senses and other helps, for making the quickest and most amazing discoveries. How doth such a genius as Sir Isaac Newton, from amidst the darkness that involves human understanding, break forth, and appear like one of another species! The vast machine we inhabit lies open to him; he seems not unacquainted with the general laws that govern it; and while,

with the transport of a philosopher, he holds and admires the glorious work, he capable of paying at once a more devout and more rational homage to his Maker. But alas! how narrow is the prospect even of such a mind! and how obscure to the compass that is taken in by the ken of an Angel; or of soul but newly escaped from its imprisonment in the body! For my part, I freely indulge my soul in the confidence of its future grandeur: it pleases me to think that I, who know so small a portion of the works of the Creator, and with slow and painful steps creep up and down on the surface of this globe, shall long shoot away with the swiftness of imagination, trace out the hidden springs of nature's operation, be able to keep pace with the heavenly bodies in the rapidity of their career, be a spectator of the long chain of events in the natural and moral worlds, visit the several apartments of the creation, know how they are furnished, and how inhabitants comprehend the order, and measure the magnitudes and distances of those orbs, which us seem disposed without any regular design and set all in the same circle; observe the dependence of the parts of each system, as if our minds are big enough to grasp the theory of the several systems upon one another, from whence results the harmony of the universe. In Eternity a great deal m

advanced to a more ..

The other, and that the man, is the enjoyment of God he cannot form a wish. Different conceptions we have of the who, as it were, keeps his pens, neither discovering nor by which means the libert to dispute his existence, & content to speak him fair, prefer every trifling satisfaction of their Maker, and ridic for the singularity of his conduct, not a time come, when they see his impious schemes made a convert to the truth.

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to have the fastest hold, the object eludes
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more perfect way of conversing with
only beings. Are not spirits capable of
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depend on inferior for the main privi-
of sociable beings, that of conversing
them, and knowing each other? What
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ide. As incorporeal substances are of a
r order, so be sure their manner of inter-
ie is answerably more expedite and inti-
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ntellectual vision, as somewhat analogous
e sense of seeing, which is the medium
r acquaintance with this visible world.
in some such way can God make him-
he object of immediate intuition to the
ed; and as he can, it is not improbable
he will, always condescending in the
mstances of doing it, to the weakness
proportion of finite minds. His works
aintly reflect the image of his perfections,
a second-hand knowledge: to have a just
of him, it may be necessary that we see
is he is. But what is that? It is some-

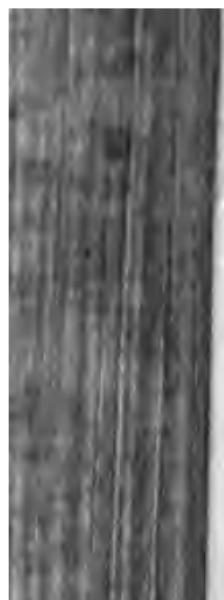
it will be my happiness to compare with the fair exemplar of it : Mind ; perhaps, to view the object of those wise designs that have been in a long succession of ages. Thus finding out his works, and contemplating the author, how shall I fall prostrate ! my body swallowed up in the matter, my mind in the infinite inflections.

Multa putans, sortemque animo m

IN compassion to those gloom

adjustment, an exact and constant order discoverable in all the parts of it. Whatever be the cause, the thing itself is evident to all our faculties. Look into the animal system, the passions, senses, and locomotive powers; is not the like contrivance and propriety observable in these two? Are they not fitted to certain ends, and are they not by nature directed to proper objects?

Is it possible then that the smallest bodies should, by a management superior to the wit of man, be disposed in the most excellent manner agreeable to their respective natures; and yet the spirits or souls of men be neglected, or managed by such rules as fall short of man's understanding? Shall every other passion be rightly placed by nature, and shall that appetite of immortality natural to all mankind be alone misplaced, or designed to be frustrated? Shall the industrious application of the inferior animal powers, in the meanest vocations, be answered by the ends we propose? and shall not the generous efforts of a virtuous mind be rewarded? In a word, shall the corporeal world be all order and harmony, the intellectual discord and confusion? He who is bigot enough to believe these things, must bid adieu to that natural rule of reasoning from analogy; must run counter to that maxim of common sense, 'That men ought to form their judgments of things unexperienced from what they have experienced.'



with a just return, reputation, which is due to us actions. The wise thinkers, out of their benevolence to mankind, from the minds of men, can be justly distributed. Ill actions are reputations; ill actions disesteemed. Subtle hypocrisy is passing light, and moderation where the heart and eyes of men, and the soul, are vitiated. Plato's point, is contained in the introduction Socrates says,

of Jove, living judges were appointed, by whom each person was judged in his life-time in the same day on which he was to die. The consequence of which was, that they often passed wrong judgments. Pluto, therefore, who presided in Tartarus, and the guardians of the blessed islands, finding that, on the other side, many unfit persons were sent to their respective dominions, complained to Jove, who promised to redress the evil. He added, the reason of these unjust proceedings is, that men are judged in the body. Hence many conceal the blemishes and imperfections of their minds by beauty, birth, and riches; not to mention, that at the time of trial there are crowds of witnesses to attest their having lived well. These things mislead the judges, who being themselves also of the number of the living, are surrounded each with his own body, as with a veil thrown over his mind. For the future, therefore, it is my intention that men do not come on their trial till after death, when they shall appear before the judge, disrobed of all their corporeal ornaments. The judge himself too shall be a pure unveiled spirit, beholding the very soul, the naked soul of the party before him. With this view I have already constituted my sons, Minos and Rhadamanthus, judges, who are natives of Asia; and Æacus, a native of Europe. These, after death, shall hold their court in a certain meadow, from which the

are two roads, leading the one to Tartarus, the other to the islands of the Blessed.'

From this, as from numberless other passages of his writings, may be seen Plato's opinion of a future state. A thing therefore in regard to us so comfortable, in itself so just and excellent, a thing so agreeable to the analogy of nature, and so universally credited by all orders and ranks of men, of all nations and ages, what is it that should move a few men to reject? Surely there must be something of prejudice in the case. I appeal to the secret thoughts of a Freethinker, if he does not argue within himself after this manner: The senses and faculties I enjoy at present are visibly designed to repair, or preserve the body from the injuries it is liable to in its present circumstances. But in an eternal state, where no decays are to be repaired, no outward injuries to be fenced against, where there are no flesh and bones, nerves or blood-vessels, there will certainly be none of the senses: and that there should be a state of life without the senses is inconceivable.

But as this manner of reasoning proceeds from a poverty of imagination, and narrowness of soul in those that use it, I shall endeavour to remedy those defects, and open their views by laying before them a case, which, being naturally possible, may perhaps, reconcile them to the belief of what is supernaturally revealed.

Let us suppose a person blind and deaf from his birth, who being grown to man's estate is by the dead-palsy, or some other cause, deprived of his feeling, tasting, and smelling; and at the same time has the impediment of his hearing removed, and the film taken from his eyes: what the five senses are to us, that the touch, taste, and smell were to him. And any other ways of perception of a more refined and extensive nature were to him as inconceivable, as to us those are, which will one day be adapted to perceive those things which 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.' And it would be just as reasonable in him to conclude that the loss of those three senses could not possibly be succeeded by any new inlets of perception, as in a modern Freethinker to imagine there can be no state of life and perception without the senses he enjoys at present. Let us further suppose the same person's eyes, at their first opening, to be struck with a great variety of the most gay and pleasing objects, and his ears with a melodious concert of vocal and instrumental music: behold him amazed, ravished, transported; and you have some distant representation, some faint and glimmering idea of the ecstatic state of the soul in that article in which she emerges from this sepulchre of flesh into life and immortality - [

*Igneus est ollis vigor, et cœlestis origo
Seminibus—*

VIRG.

THE same faculty of reason and understanding, which placeth us above the brute part of the creation, doth also subject our minds to greater or more manifold disquiets than creatures of an inferior rank are sensible of. It is by this that we anticipate future disasters, and often create to ourselves real pain from imaginary evils, as well as multiply the pangs arising from those which cannot be avoided.

It behoves us therefore to make the best use of that sublime talent which so long as it continues the instrument of passion, will serve only to make us more miserable, in proportion as we are more excellent than other beings.

It is the privilege of a thinking being to withdraw from the objects that solicit his senses, and turn his thoughts inward on himself. For my own part I often mitigate the pain arising from the little misfortunes and disappointments that chequer human life by this introversion of my faculties, wherein I regard my own soul as the image of her Creator, and receive great consolation from beholding those perfections which testify her divine original, and lead me into some knowledge of her everlasting archetype.

But there is not any property or circumstance of my being, that I contemplate with

more joy than my immortality. I can easily overlook any present momentary sorrow, when I reflect that it is in my power to be happy a thousand years hence. If it were not for this thought, I had rather be an oyster than a man, the most stupid and senseless of animals than a reasonable mind tortured with an extreme innate desire of that perfection which it despairs to obtain.

It is with great pleasure that I behold Instinct, Reason, and Faith, concurring to attest this comfortable truth. It is revealed from heaven, it is discovered by philosophers, and the ignorant, unenlightened part of mankind have a natural propensity to believe it. It is an agreeable entertainment to reflect on the various shapes under which this doctrine has appeared in the world. The Pythagorean transmigration, the sensual habitations of the Mahometans, and the shady realms of Pluto, do all agree in the main points, the continuation of our existence, and the distribution of rewards and punishments, proportioned to the merits or demerits of men in this life.

But in all those schemes there is something gross and improbable, that shocks a reasonable and speculative mind. Whereas nothing can be more rational and sublime, than the Christian idea of a future state. ‘Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things

without either ***
down divine and human laws, and ***
fellow-subjects with contempt for professi
belief of those points, on which the prese
well as future interest of mankind depend
not to be endured. For my own part, I
omit no endeavours to render their pers
despicable, and their practices as odious,
eye of the world, as they deserve.

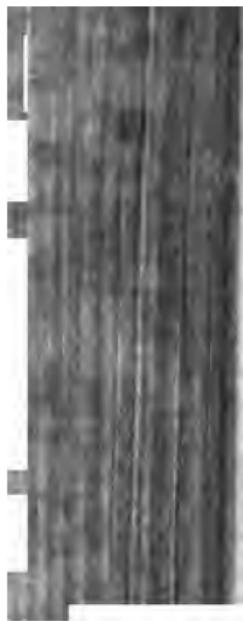
SECTION XI. DEATH AND JUDGMENT.

A mata est numine quando VII

of annihilation before them ; or so ill-natured, as to endeavour to persuade mankind to the disbelief of what is so pleasing and profitable even in the prospect ; or so blind as not to see that there is a Deity, and if there be, that this scheme of things flows from his attributes, and evidently corresponds with the other parts of his creation.

I know not how to account for this absurd turn of thought, except it proceed from a want of other employment, joined with an affection of singularity. I shall, therefore, inform our modern Freethinkers of two points, whereof they seem to be ignorant. The first is, that it is not the being singular, but being singular for something that argues either extraordinary endowments of nature, or benevolent intentions to mankind, which draws the admiration and esteem of the world. A mistake in this point naturally arises from that confusion of thought, which I do not remember to have seen so great instances of in any writers, as in certain modern Freethinkers.

The other point is, that there are innumerable objects within the reach of a human mind, and each of these objects may be viewed in innumerable lights and positions, and the relations arising between them are innumerable. There is, therefore, an infinity of things, whereon to employ their thoughts, *if not with advantage to the world, at least with amusement to themselves, and with*



"That death, w
world, is nothing else
bodies, teaches us, th
these bodies, which i
other world. The o
a distance from us :
throne of God indee
from this earth, above
he displays his glor:
which encompass his
we step out of these
other world, which is
world (for there is th
still) as a new state c
bodies is to live in th
them is to remove :

r this veil of flesh parts the visible and invisible world: but when we put off these bodies, there are new and surprising wonders resent themselves to our views; when these material spectacles are taken off, the soul with s own naked eyes sees what was invisible efore; and then we are in the other world, hen we can see it, and converse with it. Thus St. Paul tells us, that when we are at ome in the body, we are absent from the ord; but when we are absent from the body, e are present with the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 6, 8. nd methinks this is enough to cure us of our ndness for these bodies, unless we think it ore desirable to be confined to a prison, and look through a grate all our lives, which es us but a very narrow prospect, and that e of the best neither, than to be set at ty to view all the glories of the world. it would we give now for the least glimpse at invisible world, which the first step we out of these bodies will present us with? : are such things as eye hath not seen, r heard, neither hath it entered into the of man to conceive: death opens our nlarges our prospect, presents us with and more glorious world, which we can e while we are shut up in flesh; which make us as willing to part with this to take the film off our eyes, which ur sight."

— — —

As a thinking man cannot but be much affected with the idea of his appearance in the presence of that Being, whom we can see and live; he must be much affected when he considers that this whom he appears before, will examine the actions of his past life, and reward or punish him accordingly. I must confess, that there is no scheme of religion besides Christianity, which can possibly support most virtuous person under this thought. If a man's innocence be what it will, let us rise to the highest pitch of perfection attainable in this life, there will be still so many secret sins, so many human failings, so many offences of ignorance, passion, prejudice, so many unguarded words, thoughts, and, in short, so many defects in his best actions, that, without the advantage of such an expiation and atonement as Christianity has revealed to us, it is impossible he should be cleared before his Supreme Judge, or that he should be able to stand in his sight. Our holy Religion suggests the only means, whereby our guilt is taken away, and our imperfect obedience accepted.

It is this series of thought that I have deavoured to express in the following *Essay*, which I have composed during this present illness.

I.

When rising from the bed of death,
O'erwhelm'd with guilt and fear,
I see my Maker face to face,
O how shall I appear!

II.

If yet, while pardon may be found,
And mercy may be sought,
My heart with inward horror shrinks,
And trembles at the thought;

III.

When thou, O Lord, shalt stand disclos'd;
In majesty severe,
And sit in judgment on my soul,
O how shall I appear!

IV.

But thou hast told the troubled mind,
Who does her sins lament,
The timely tribute of her tears
Shall endless woe prevent.

V.

Then see the sorrows of my heart,
Ere yet it be too late;
And hear my Saviour's dying groans,
To give those sorrows weight.

VI.

For never shall my soul despair
Her pardon to procure,
Who knows thy only Son has dy'd
To make her pardon sure.

— Animæque capaces
Mortis —

LUCAS.

THE prospect of death is so gloomy and dismal, that if it were constantly before our eyes, would imbitter all the sweets of life. TV

gracious Author of our being hath therefore so formed us, that we are capable of many pleasing sensations and reflections, and meet with so many amusements and solicitudes, as divert our thoughts from dwelling upon an evil, which, by reason of its seeming distance, makes but languid impressions upon the mind. But how distant soever the time of our death may be, since it is certain that we must die, it is necessary to allot some portion of our life to consider the end of it; and it is highly convenient to fix some stated times to meditate upon the final period of our existence here. The principle of self-love, as we are men, will make us inquire, what is like to become of us after our dissolution; and our conscience, as we are Christians, will inform us, that, according to the good or evil of our actions here, we shall be translated to the mansions of eternal bliss or misery. When this is seriously weighed, we must think it madness to be unprepared against the black moment; but when we reflect that perhaps that black moment may be to-night, how watchful ought we to be!

I was wonderfully affected with a discourse I had lately with a clergyman of my acquaintance upon this head, which was to this effect: ‘The consideration,’ said the good man, ‘that *my being is precarious*, moved me many years ago to make a resolution, which I have diligently kept, and to which I owe the greatest

satisfaction that a mortal man can enjoy. Every night, before I address myself in private to my Creator, I lay my hand upon my heart, and ask myself, whether, if God should require my soul of me this night, I could hope for mercy from him? The bitter agonies I underwent, in this my first acquaintance with myself, were so far from throwing me into despair of that mercy which is over all God's works, that they rather proved motives to greater circumspection in my future conduct. The oftener I exercised myself in meditations of this kind, the less was my anxiety; and by making the thoughts of death familiar, what was at first so terrible and shocking is become the sweetest of my enjoyments. These contemplations have indeed made me serious, but not sullen; nay, they are so far from having soured my temper, that as I have a mind perfectly composed, and a secret spring of joy in my heart, so my conversation is pleasant, and my countenance serene. I taste all the innocent satisfactions of life pure and sincere; I have no share in pleasures that leave a sting behind them, nor am I cheated with that kind of mirth, in the midst of which there is heaviness.'

pubd
follows:

' DEAR SIR,
' You formerly observed to me
made a more ridiculous figure than the disparity we often find
and well. Thus one of an institution is perpetually exhibiting
example of the weakness of his body, in their turns. I have
opportunities of late to consider different views, and hope I may
advantage by it. If what

The soul's dark cottage, bat
Lets in new light thro' chin'

Then surely sickness, co
old age to the shaking
the body, may discover
more plainly. Sick
age; it teaches us
state, and inspires

future, better than a thousand volumes of philosophers and divines. It gives so warning & concussion to those props of our vanity, our strength and youth, that we think of fortifying ourselves within, when there is so little dependence on our outworks. Youth, at the very best, is but a betrayer of human life in a gentler and smoother manner than age: it is like a stream, that nourishes a plant upon its bank, and causes it to flourish and blossom to the sight, but at the same time is undermining it at the root in secret. My youth has dealt more fairly and openly with me; it has afforded several prospects of my danger, and given me an advantage not very common to young men, that the attractions of the world have not dazzled me very much; and I began where most people end, with a full conviction of the emptiness of all sorts of ambition, and the unsatisfactory nature of all human pleasures.

' When a smart fit of sickness tells me this scurvy tenement of my body will fall in a little time, I am even as unconcerned as was that honest Hibernian, who (being in bed in the great storm some years ago, and told the house would tumble over his head,) made answer, " What care I for the house? I am only a lodger." I fancy it is the best time to die when one is in the best humour; and so excessively weak as I now am, I may say with

little atom every single
the whole creation, methinks it is a :
be concerned at the removal of such
animal as I am. The morning after
the sun will arise as bright as ever, th
smell as sweet, the plants spring as g
world will proceed in its old cours
will laugh as heartily, and marry :
they were used to do. "The m
man," as it is elegantly expressed in
dom of Solomon, "passeth away
membrance of a guest that tarriet
day." There are reasons enough, in
chapter of the same book, to make
man contented with the prospect
"The honourable age is not that i







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